PONTIFICIUM CONSILIUM
PRO
DIALOGO INTER RELIGIONES

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Pro Dialogo

June – December 2011

Including

PCID-WCC DOCUMENT ON
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RECOMMENDATIONS FOR CONDUCT"
(GENEVA, 28 JUNE 2011)

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"*PILGRIMS OF TRUTH, PILGRIMS OF PEACE*"
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Bulletin 137 **2011/2**

Pontificium Consilium pro Dialogo inter Religiones
Civitate Vaticana

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Inside this volume

What follows is an overview of the content of this issue of the "Pro-Dialogo" Bulletin covering the period from June to December of 2011.

First off are excerpts of interventions by the Holy Father who, on several occasions, touched on aspects of interreligious dialogue:

1) To the new Ambassador of Syria the reminder of the necessity that urgent reforms in the political and socio-economic status of the country take place in a climate of respect for the truth and the legitimate rights of individuals and groups, rather than through violence or conflict (June 9);

2) In response to a question from journalists during the flight to Madrid on the occasion of the World Youth Day, the Holy Father explained the inseparable connection between truth and freedom, based on the fact that the truth cannot be imposed, but only accepted freely. Truth is a dialogue, seeking to know and understand through interchange with others (18 August);

3) In the message sent to the participants in the "Prayer for Peace" organized by the Community of Sant'Egidio in Munich from 11 to 13 September, Benedict XVI called on religions to ask themselves how to promote peaceful coexistence in the world and to be watchful of how the image of God is being distorted, because if religions do not encounter the divine mystery, they end up destroying peace instead of building it. The search for peace is a permanent mandate and a gift for which to implore (September 1);

4) To the Bishops of India in *ad limina* visit, the Pope said that the dignity of the human person is a gift from the Creator and encouraged the Bishops to protect it by dialoguing with other Christians and the followers of other religious traditions (September 19);

5) In his message for the World Day of Migrants, the Pope emphasized the impact on society of internal and international migration not only from a human point of view, but also from ethical, religious and spiritual aspects (September 21);

6) During the Apostolic Visit to Germany, at the meeting with the Muslim community in Berlin, the Holy Father explained that the German Constitution, inspired by the Christian vision of man, recognized the inalienable rights of the human person, which precede any legal formulation. In a pluralistic context such as the present, Christians and Muslims can build a society different from that of the past, starting with their respective beliefs, offering an important witness in

many vital areas, such as the protection of the family based on marriage, respect for life, and the promotion of greater social justice (23 September), a commitment reaffirmed at the following general audience in St. Peter's Square (September 28)

7) The Pope encouraged the Bishops of Indonesia in their *ad limina* visit to make a commitment to interreligious dialogue (October 7);

8) To the Bishops of Angola and São Tomé and Príncipe, who were also in Rome in *ad Limina* visit, the Holy Father posed the pastoral problem of those baptized, who are as yet divided between adherence to the Gospel and certain practices of African Traditional Religion which are incompatible with the following of Christ (October 29);

9) To Members of the Israeli Religious Council, recalling the delicacy of the mission of the religious leaders in the Holy Land, Benedict XVI described the world we are faced with today where there are two types of violence: that which is exercised in the name of religion, and that which is the consequence of rejecting God, a tendency frequently found in modern society (November 10),

10) Throughout the Apostolic Journey to Benin the theme of the dialogue was recurrent: during the flight to Cotonou, the Holy Father praised the climate of mutual respect between Christians of different denominations, Muslims, and followers of Traditional Religion, citing their shared commitment to peace and reconciliation (November 18); to the members of the Government, the representatives of the institutions, diplomats and religious leaders, the Pope said that true interreligious dialogue rejects humanly self-centred truth, because the one and only truth is in God; to use the revealed word, the Sacred Scriptures or the name of God to justify our interests is a very grave fault. Dialogue does not take place through weakness. We enter into dialogue because we believe in God, the Lord of history and our future. Dialogue is another way of loving God and our neighbour out of love for the truth, (November 19). On leaving Benin at the end of his journey in Cotonou airport, he shared his hope that Africa could indicate to the rest of the world the path to be taken towards living an authentic fraternity in justice, based on the greatness of the family and of labour (November 20);

11) The publication of the Apostolic Exhortation *Africae Munus* presented the Holy Father Benedict XVI with the opportunity to encourage the African Church to renew the impetus for the inculturation of the Gospel, interreligious dialogue -especially with Islam and the followers of traditional religion - and evangelization through the witness of service given to reconciliation, justice and peace (November 19);

12) To the participants in the World Congress for the Pastoral Care of International Students, the pope said that the most fertile ground for dialogue among those in search of an authentic humanism is the encounter between cultures. In universities, it needs to be supported by creating a base of those human

and Christian principles necessary to raise up a new generation capable of dialogue and discernment, and committed to spreading respect and cooperation towards peace and development (December 2).

Next are the speeches of the President of the Pontifical Council for Interreligious Dialogue on issues of current importance. In his homily on the occasion of the European Episcopal Conference (CEE), Cardinal Tauran said that religious pluralism is part of the mysterious plan of God (Cathedral of Turin, June 1).

Speaking on behalf of His Holiness Benedict XVI in an international conference on Christians in the Holy Land (Lambeth Palace, London, July 19), he explained the vocation of Christians to be a bridge: from the time of Cain and Abel, in the heart of man dwells exclusivism and the desire for security, but both history and religions teach that there is only one future for all, and that is a shared future. Many Muslims - he argued – are also concerned about the future of Christians in the Middle East, because they know that Christians can help them understand modernity and to reconcile diversity and unity.

In an interview with the monthly magazine *Traces* (October 2011), in preparation for the pilgrimage to Assisi, the President of PCID affirmed that freedom of religion far outweighs freedom of worship. It is possible to participate in the public dialogue as a believer. Freedom of religion, therefore, is a force for peace. Believers who are on pilgrimage together, who meditate in silence on their common origin and their common destiny, on their limitations and on their responsibilities, are an asset to the entire human community and are themselves an invitation to appreciate the great cultural traditions open to transcendence, which are able to express so well our longing for truth and freedom.

In order to strengthen relations between the Catholic Church and members of other religious traditions, Cardinal Jean-Louis Tauran made a visit to India from 6 to 13 November, during which he delivered a number of speeches of great interest to the theme of interreligious dialogue. In particular, he called on Muslims to unite efforts, as believers, for the common concerns regarding current patterns of development, intercultural life and its conflicts, justice, and ecology (Mumbai, November 6); addressing Hindus he reiterated the same appeal made by Blessed John Paul II in 1986 to the religious leaders and intellectuals of India to "eliminate hunger, poverty, ignorance, persecution, discrimination and all forms of slavery of the human spirit," with the knowledge that it will be difficult to ensure a lasting peace in society until these basic needs are satisfied and the fundamental

rights of the human person met (Jnana Deepa Vidyapeeth, Pune, November 6); in the Interreligious Meeting that was held in Vigyan Bhavan, New Delhi, he addressed an invitation to all those present, especially Hindus and Sikhs, to grow in mutual understanding to build a lasting peace, which is the prerequisite of all human progress; artistic and cultural (New Delhi, November 10); in the Golden Temple in Amritsar, the Cardinal turned to the Sikhs, inviting them to cultivate cooperation with believers of different religious traditions (Amritsar, November 11), a theme which he later developed at the Sikh-Christian Seminar before an audience of university students, to whom he did not hide the difficulties of the challenge to believers living between two extremes: the religious fundamentalists who propagate a culture of hatred and violence, and the advocates of secularism, who chide religion considering it obsolete, forgetting that we are all part of one human family and are forced to live and work for a universal brotherhood under the one fatherhood of God (*Guru Nanak Dev* University, Amritsar, November 12), Cardinal Tauran issued an invitation to the Jains as well in their meeting at *Sushil Muni Ashram*, Delhi, to cooperate with Christians to promote justice, peace and harmony on the basis of *Ahimsa*, the moral principle to not cause offense to life (Delhi, November 13).

Speaking at an international colloquium organized by the French Embassy to the Holy See, the President of the PCID presented "The Eastern Christians in Muslim-Christian Dialogue," showing that those Christians, "descendants of the early Church of Jerusalem", who " literally surround the holy places with their presence, to prevent them from being reduced to simple museums, are unfortunately forced to choose the path of emigration, because - in a context marked by the failure to resolve the Israeli-Palestinian conflict and the manifestations of an aggressive Islam - they do not see a future for their children. This despite the fact that Christianity, Islam and Judaism promote a pedagogy of encounter and share common values, such as respect for life, the sense of brotherhood, and the religious dimension of existence, which can promote the common good of our pluralistic societies (Centre Saint -Louis, Rome, December 2).

In the beginning of the section of the Bulletin given to the texts of various kinds, the reader will find the talk on "The ethics of the use of new technology," given by H. E. Archbishop Patrick Kelly, Archbishop of Liverpool, at the Ninth Conference on Interreligious Dialogue in Doha, Qatar, on the relationship between social media and Interreligious Dialogue (24-26 October). New technologies allow us to communicate with great speed - Bishop Kelly argued - but they need to be used with wisdom and sense of responsibility with concern for the "Truth", and not in an emotional or superficial manner.

Following this are the interventions given by the Catholic side at the Second Seminar of the Catholic-Muslim Forum on "Reason, faith and the human person", which took place in Jordan, at the site of the Baptism of the Lord (21-23 November).

The first speaker, François Bousquet, professor at the Institut Catholique in Paris, developed the theme of "man in the light of the Christian faith." Starting from the studies of Paul Ricoeur, the rapporteur developed the following points: a) the one God as unifier of the person, b) the person as having reason and belief, faith and reason as obedience and listening, c) after the heart of God, every person is unique and all are integral. God creates to enjoy another communion, as in the life of the Trinity, but with a being of another nature. "Our faith in God the Creator and in the Incarnate Word brings us unfailingly to the carnal reality and our responsibility for sharing and protecting life: the fight against hunger, for health, ecology, justice, peace starting with taking care of our neighbour. "

The second speaker, Vittorio Possenti, a professor at the University of Venice, developed the theme: "Reason, Faith and Person" from the Christian perspective. Reason is the foundation of all dialogue, including interreligious dialogue. It is human nature that makes of the person a being having dignity. Endowed with intellect and will, the human being is capable of knowing good and evil by virtue of practical reason and the natural moral law. The moral conscience is the most immediate expression of the human person. The emergence in the culture of the idea of person and of the dignity that it is due him/her, with the necessary recognition of rights and duties, is the herald of promising developments in interreligious dialogue, which regards God and man, and the concrete statutes of the person with his/her rights and duties.

Finally the paper on "The Awakening of God," published not without some intellectual and practical prompting, written by Paolo Becchi, a professor at the University of Genoa. The awakening of God is at the same time the awakening of man, who is likely to have remained a prisoner in a nightmare of the "death of God" and, with God, man's own death. One of the main innovations of the new millennium, in fact, is the return of religion to the public arena as a reaction to the "desertification" of the culture caused by secularization. But the fundamental issue is that of the encounter between religion and politics. Confidence in the dominant political ideologies of the last century has collapsed, along with the collapse of "real socialism". After the failure of a liberal market, showing the limits of economic globalization, religion has returned to be a point of reference for men and women who are increasingly confused by and unable to escape from a society in crisis. The Catholic Church, in particular, has once again become a stable point for many. But in Europe - following the phenomena of massive immigration

- Christianity finds itself in everyday life (construction of mosques and minarets, the crucifix in schools, kindergartens diet, etc.), juxtaposed with the predominantly Muslim religion of origin of these immigrants. The moment the fundamentalist part of Islam seeks to establish itself on the world stage, it is inevitable that the other side will rediscover the Judeo-Christian roots. The solution, however, cannot be crosses versus mosques and minarets, nor secularism against crosses and the Islamic veil, but rather broader religious freedom for all, and the right to free expression in public as long as this does not lead to hatred, violence and abuse against those who have different beliefs.

Then there is the "idealist" way, which continues to trust the State, namely the constitutional form that it has now taken "with its ability to welcome and integrate pluralism by means of the principles of freedom and equality." The constitutional State has come into areas that were previously the sole responsibility of morality and religion. Religion today is trying in some way to reclaim them. In the end the return of religion to the public sphere is also a response to the moralization of law that becomes apparent when the constitutional organization lays claim to being judge for all of human existence. It has been said that in this way the Church is trying to impose its morality on all citizens, but it is rather the State that cannot require believers to carry out actions deemed incompatible with their faith.

How then to satisfy the authentic need for a sense of religion without falling into conflict with the different forms of fundamentalism? On what can the Constitution be based in order to avoid being trapped by a judgemental relativism? One universal principle able to overcome the particularity of the various revealed truths is the "*principium dignitatis*", taking on a kind of authoritative *Grundnorm* for existing organizations. On one hand it tries to conserve the deeper legacy of the judeo-christian civilization and on the other hand it tries to individuate a reference point, which in contrast to fundamental rights is not exposed to the trap of being weighed and then deemed limited.

Man's theology as created in the image of God has opened the door to a possible reading of dignity as egalitarian. This idea does not imply that a man of faith is necessarily more privileged, because every person, regardless of confession, in fact even if he or she does or does not belong to a particular denomination, is an icon of God just from the mere fact of being human. From the point of view of different religious perspectives, even if Islam has a concept of dignity different from that of the other two great monotheistic religions, the person is entitled to dignity because he or she is the only being in creation to have made a pact with God. Referring to the uniqueness of Man in the design of creation and the responsibility which comes from that, the call for dignity of the person in interreligious dialogue becomes highly significant.

In the section "Reports / Press Releases / Statements" the reader will find the text of the Press Release on the Second Meeting of Delegates for Relations with Islam in Europe of the Council of European Bishops' Conferences (CCEE): "Towards an Inculturation of Islam" (May 31 - June 1), the text "Christian Witness in a Multi-Religious World: Recommendations for Conduct ", published in Geneva on June 28, preceded by an explanatory report and followed by an early evaluation summary; a report on the Day of Reflection, Dialogue and Prayer for Peace and Justice in the World, "Pilgrims of Truth, Pilgrims of Peace", held in Assisi on October 27th , 25 years after the historic meeting desired by Blessed John Paul II. This report is accompanied by publication of all the material from the event including the interventions of Pope Benedict XVI and other religious leaders in Assisi, the list of heads of delegation, and the official statements coming from the Press Office of the Holy See (October 27 to 28); the report on the visit of the Pontifical Council for Interreligious Dialogue to India (6-13 November); and, finally, the press release of the second Seminar of the Catholic-Muslim Forum on "Reason, Faith, and the Human Person" held at the site of the Baptism of the Lord on the Jordan (21-23 November).

In the section dedicated to the Messages there is: the text of the Message addressed to Muslims for the end of Ramadan: "Christians and Muslims: Working Together for Mankind's Spiritual Dimension" (19 August), the text of Message to Hindus for the Feast of Deepavali: "Christians and Hindus: Together in Promoting Religious Freedom" (October 20), the Greeting to the Sikhs on the occasion of the birth of Siri Guru Nanak Sahib: "Christians and Sikhs: Collaborating in the Construction of a Harmonious Society "(October 29).

Offered in the section "News" is an account of the 40th Meeting of the Commissions of the European Region of the Monastic Interreligious Dialogue (DIM-MID) (Santiago de Compostela, August 29-September 2); a report on the meeting of Zen monks at the Village des Pruniers with the monks of Solesmes (Solesmes, 26 September - 1 October); a report on interfaith conference on climate change, which took place in Bangladesh (October 8); and finally, a report of the visit of a Jain Delegation to the Pontifical Council for Interreligious Dialogue (Rome, 6 December).

The editor would like to apologize for the delay with which this Bulletin is published. It would be most appreciated if anyone would like to send news about initiatives in the area of interreligious dialogue, in particular those carried out at a national Church level, as well as any other significant contributions around the same theme of Interreligious Dialogue.

Apologizing for the delay in the publication of this number of the Bulletin, the editor expresses his gratitude to those at the national ecclesial level who would like to send news about interreligious dialogue initiatives as well as significant studies on interreligious dialogue.

Dans ce volume

Nous présentons ci-dessous le contenu principal de ce numéro du Bulletin « Pro-dialogo » couvrant la période de juin à décembre 2011.

Ce sont tout d'abord des extraits des discours du Saint Père qui, à plusieurs reprises, a abordé certains aspects du dialogue interreligieux: 1) Au nouvel Ambassadeur de Syrie, il a réitéré la nécessité que les réformes urgentes dans la vie politique, socio-économique et sociale du pays, adviennent dans un climat de respect de la vérité et des droits légitimes des individus et des groupes, et non par la violence ou les conflits (9 juin). 2) Répondant à une question des journalistes durant le vol vers Madrid à l'occasion de la Journée Mondiale de la Jeunesse, le pape a expliqué le lien indissoluble entre vérité et liberté, lien fondé sur le fait que la vérité ne peut être imposée mais se reçoit librement. La vérité est dialogique, parce qu'elle cherche à connaitre et à apprendre à travers le dialogue avec les autres (18 août). 3) Dans le Message adressé aux participants à la Réunion de Prière pour la Paix organisée par la communauté de Sant'Egidio à Munich, du 11 au 13 septembre 2011, Benoît XVI a demandé aux religions de s'interroger sur la manière dont les religions peuvent promouvoir la coexistence pacifique dans le monde et rester vigilantes sur les distorsions de l'image de Dieu ; car, si les religions ne vont pas à la rencontre du mystère divin, elles finissent par détruire la paix au lieu de la construire. La quête de paix est un mandat permanent et un don à implorer (1er septembre). 4) Il a souligné, s'adressant aux évêques de l'Inde en visite *ad Limina*, que la dignité humaine est un don du Créateur à protéger, en dialogue avec les autres chrétiens et les adeptes d'autres traditions religieuses (19 septembre) ; 5) Dans le Message pour la Journée mondiale des Migrants, le Souverain Pontife a mis en évidence l'impact des migrations internes et internationales sur la société, non seulement du point de vue humain mais aussi du point de vue éthique, religieux et spirituel (21 septembre) ; 6) Au cours de son voyage apostolique en Allemagne, à l'occasion de la réunion avec la communauté musulmane à Berlin, le pape Benoît XVI a expliqué que la Constitution allemande, s'inspirant d'une vision chrétienne de l'homme, reconnaît les droits inaliénables de la personne humaine qui, à leur tour, précèdent toute formulation positive. Dans le contexte pluraliste actuel, chrétiens et musulmans peuvent construire une société différente de celle du passé et, à partir de leurs croyances respectives, peuvent offrir un témoignage important dans de nombreux domaines essentiels, tels que la protection de la famille fondée sur le mariage, le respect pour la vie et la promotion de

plus de justice sociale (23 septembre). Cet engagement a été réaffirmé à l'occasion de l'Audience Générale hebdomadaire sur la place Saint-Pierre (28 septembre) ; 7) Aux évêques de l'Indonésie en visite *ad limina*, le pape a adressé une exhortation à enraciner dans la charité le dépassement des incompréhensions et de la méfiance par notre engagement dans le dialogue interreligieux (7 octobre) ; 8) Aux évêques de l'Angola et de São Tomé et Príncipe, eux aussi à Rome en visite *ad Limina*, le Saint Père a posé le problème de la pastorale des baptisés, ces derniers étant parfois encore divisés entre l'adhésion à l'Évangile et certaines pratiques de la religion traditionnelle africaine incompatibles avec la séquelle du Christ (29 octobre) ; 9) Aux Membres du Conseil Religieux Israélien, rappelant la délicatesse de la mission des chefs religieux en Terre Sainte, Benoît XVI a rappelé que nous sommes aujourd'hui confrontés à deux sortes de violence : celle qui se manifeste au nom de la religion et celle qui est la conséquence, assez fréquente dans les sociétés modernes, du rejet de Dieu (10 novembre) ; 10) Le thème du dialogue interreligieux est souvent revenu lors du voyage apostolique au Bénin: pendant le vol vers Cotonou, le pape a loué le climat de respect mutuel entre chrétiens de différentes confessions, les musulmans et les adeptes de la religion traditionnelle ainsi que leur engagement commun en faveur de la paix et de la réconciliation (18 novembre) ; aux membres du Gouvernement, aux représentants des institutions, aux diplomates et aux chefs religieux, le pape a dit que le vrai dialogue interreligieux rejette la vérité centrée sur elle-même, parce que Dieu est la seule vérité. Utiliser la Parole révélée pour justifier des intérêts, certaines politiques ou bien encore la violence, est une faute très grave. Le dialogue ne se poursuit pas par faiblesse ou naïveté, et l'espérance placée en l'être humain est un acte de foi en Dieu, Seigneur de l'histoire et de notre avenir (19 novembre). En quittant le Bénin, à l'aéroport de Cotonou, le pape a appelé de ses vœux qu'un pays africain puisse indiquer au reste du monde comment vivre une véritable fraternité dans la justice, fondée sur l'importance de la famille et du travail (20 novembre). 11) La publication de l'Exhortation apostolique *Africæ Munus* a été l'occasion pour le pape Benoît XVI d'encourager l'Église qui est en Afrique à donner une nouvelle impulsion à l'inculturation de l'Évangile, au dialogue interreligieux, notamment avec l'islam et les adeptes de la religion traditionnelle ainsi qu'à l'évangélisation par le témoignage du service de la réconciliation, de la justice et de la paix (19 novembre). 12) Aux participants du Congrès mondial de la pastorale des étudiants internationaux, le pape a dit que la rencontre entre les cultures est le terrain le plus fertile pour le dialogue entre ceux qui cherchent un humanisme authentique. Dans les Universités, le dialogue doit s'appuyer sur les principes essentiels humains et chrétiens qui sont les fondements sur lesquels peut se former une nouvelle génération capable de discernement et de dialogue, engagée à diffuser le respect et la coopération pour la paix et le développement (2 décembre).

Viennent ensuite les discours du Président sur des sujets de grande actualité. Dans son homélie à l'occasion de l'Assemblée des Conférences Épiscopales d'Europe (CEE), le cardinal Tauran a déclaré que le pluralisme religieux fait partie du dessein mystérieux de Dieu (Cathédrale de Turin, 1er juin). Intervenant comme représentant de Sa Sainteté Benoît XVI lors d'une conférence internationale sur les chrétiens en Terre Sainte (Lambeth Palace, Londres, 19 juillet), le cardinal a parlé de la vocation des chrétiens à établir des ponts : depuis les temps de Caïn et Abel, l'exclusivisme et le désir de sécurité demeurent au cœur de l'homme, mais l'histoire, comme les religions, enseignent qu'il n'est qu'un seul avenir pour tous que c'est un avenir partagé. Beaucoup de musulmans sont préoccupés par l'avenir des chrétiens au Moyen-Orient parce qu'ils savent que les chrétiens peuvent aider à comprendre la modernité et à réconcilier unité et diversité.

Dans une interview au mensuel *Tracce* (octobre 2011), dédié à la préparation du pèlerinage à Assise, le Président du Conseil Pontifical pour le Dialogue interreligieux (CPDI) a déclaré que la liberté religieuse dépasse de loin la liberté de culte. Elle est l'occasion de participer au débat public en tant que croyants. La liberté de religion est donc une force pour la paix. Les croyants qui se rejoignent en pèlerinage, méditant en silence sur leur origine commune et leur destin commun, sur leurs limites et leurs responsabilités, sont une ressource pour l'ensemble de la communauté humaine et une invitation à apprécier les grandes traditions culturelles ouvertes à la transcendance ; ils expriment ainsi leur aspiration à la vérité et à la liberté.

Afin de renforcer les relations entre l'Église catholique et les adeptes d'autres traditions religieuses, le cardinal Jean-Louis Tauran a visité, du 6 au 13 novembre, l'Inde. Il y a prononcé plusieurs discours de grand intérêt pour le thème du dialogue interreligieux. En particulier, il a exhorté les musulmans à unir leurs efforts, en tant que croyants, sur les préoccupations communes au sujet des tendances actuelles du développement, de la vie interculturelle et de ses conflits, sur la justice et l'écologie (Mumbaï, le 6 novembre). En ce qui concerne les hindous, il a fait sien l'appel lancé par le Bienheureux Jean-Paul II en 1986 aux leaders religieux et intellectuels de l'Inde à « éliminer la faim, la pauvreté, l'ignorance, les persécutions, la discrimination et toutes les formes d'esclavage de l'esprit humain », tout en demeurant bien conscients qu'il sera difficile de garantir à la société une paix durable tant que les besoins fondamentaux et les droits fondamentaux de la personne humaine ne seront pas satisfaits (Jnana Deepa Vidyapeeth, Pune, le 6 novembre) ; la rencontre interreligieuse qui s'est tenue à Vigyan Bhavan, New Delhi, a voulu adresser, en particulier aux hindous et aux Sikhs de l'auditoire, une invitation à grandir dans la compréhension mutuelle, préalable de tout progrès humain, culturel et artistique, pour construire une paix durable (New Delhi, le 10

novembre). Au Temple d'or d'Amritsar, le cardinal s'est adressé aux Sikhs, les invitant à développer la coopération avec les croyants des différentes traditions religieuses (Amritsar, l 11 novembre). Il a repris ce même thème à l'occasion du séminaire sikh-chrétien devant un auditoire d'étudiants universitaires auxquels il n'a pas caché la difficulté d'un défi, entre deux extrêmes, posé aux croyants : d'une part les fondamentalistes religieux, qui propagent une culture de la haine et de la violence et, d'autre part, les partisans de la laïcité, qui se jouent des religions qu'ils considèrent comme obsolètes, oubliant que nous sommes tous partie d'une même famille humaine et "condamnés" à vivre et à travailler pour une fraternité universelle sous la paternité de Dieu (Guru Nanak Dev University, Amritsar, le 12 novembre). Le cardinal Tauran a également rencontré les jaïns à l'Ashram Muni de Sushil, Delhi, où il leur a lancé un appel à travailler avec les chrétiens pour la promotion de la justice, de la paix et de l'harmonie sur la base d'*Ahimsa*, le principe moral de ne pas causer d'offenses à la vie (Delhi, le 13 novembre).

Intervenant lors d'un colloque international organisé par l'Ambassade de France auprès du Saint-Siège sur le thème : « Les chrétiens de l'Orient dans le dialogue islamo-chrétien », le Président a souligné que ces chrétiens, « descendants de la première Église de Jérusalem » entourent littéralement de leur présence les lieux saints et évitent ainsi qu'ils se réduisent à être un simple musée. Ils doivent malheureusement choisir la voie de l'émigration parce que – dans un contexte marqué par l'échec à résoudre le conflit israélo-palestinien et les manifestations d'un islam agressif – ils ne voient pas d'avenir pour leurs enfants. Pourtant, christianisme, islam et judaïsme encouragent une pédagogie de la rencontre et partagent des valeurs communes telles que le respect pour la vie, le sens de la fraternité et la dimension religieuse de l'existence. Toutes ces valeurs peuvent favoriser le bien commun de notre société pluraliste (Centre Saint-Louis, Rome, le 2 décembre).

En ouverture de la section du Bulletin réservée aux textes de diverses natures, le lecteur trouvera, en premier lieu, l'allocution sur « l'éthique de l'utilisation des nouvelles technologies » prononcée par son excellence Mgr Patrick Kelly, archevêque de Liverpool, à la 9e Conférence sur le dialogue interreligieux à Doha, au Qatar, sur la relation entre les moyens de communication sociale et le dialogue interreligieux (24-26 octobre). Les nouvelles technologies permettent de communiquer à une grande vitesse – a soutenu Mgr Kelly – mais il faut les utiliser avec sagesse et sens des responsabilité, et non sur le plan émotionnel ou superficiel, et toujours dans un souci de « Vérité ».

Viennent ensuite les contributions offertes par l'Église catholique à l'occasion du II Séminaire du Forum catholique-musulman « Raison, foi et personne humai-

ne », qui s'est tenu en Jordanie, sur le site du Baptême du Seigneur (21-23 novembre).

Le premier intervenant, le P. François Bousquet, Professeur à l'Institut Catholique de Paris, a parlé du thème de « l'être humain à la lumière de la foi chrétienne ». Partant des études de Paul Ricœur, il a développé les points suivants : a) un Dieu unique comme un fédérateur de la personne ; b) la personne raisonnable et croyante : foi et raison comme obéissance et écoute ; c) selon le cœur de Dieu, chaque personne est unique et tous sont solidaires. Dieu crée pour jouir d'une autre communion, comme dans la vie de la Trinité, mais avec un être de nature différente. « Notre foi en Dieu créateur et dans le Verbe incarné nous amène sans cesse aux réalités charnelles et à notre responsabilité dans le partage et la protection de la vie : la lutte contre la faim, la santé, l'écologie, la justice, la paix, à commencer par le soin de notre prochain ».

Le second intervenant, le Prof. Vittorio Possenti, de l'Université de Venise, a développé le thème : « Raison, foi et personne » dans la perspective chrétienne. La raison est le fondement de tout dialogue, y compris le dialogue interreligieux. C'est la nature humaine qui fait des hommes des êtres dotés de dignité. Doté d'intelligence et de volonté, l'être humain est en mesure de connaître le bien et le mal du fait de la raison pratique et de la loi morale naturelle. La conscience morale représente la manifestation la plus immédiate de l'homme. L'irruption dans la culture de l'idée de personne et de la dignité humaine qui lui est due, avec la reconnaissance des droits et des devoirs, est le signe avant-coureur des développements prometteurs du dialogue interreligieux qui concernent Dieu et l'homme ainsi que le statut réel de la personne avec ses droits et ses devoirs.

Nous publions ensuite une contribution sur « Le réveil de Dieu », non dénuée de provocations intellectuelles et pratiques, signée de Paul Becchi, Professeur à l'Université de Gênes. Le réveil de Dieu est un double réveil de l'homme qui risque de rester prisonnier d'un cauchemar : celui de la « mort de Dieu » et, avec lui, celui de la mort de l'homme. Une des principales innovations du nouveau millénaire est, en fait, le retour de la religion sur la scène publique en réaction au dessèchement causé par la sécularisation. Mais le point fondamental est la comparaison entre religion et politique. La confiance dans les idéologies politiques dominantes au XXe siècle s'est effondrée avec l'écroulement du « socialisme réel » et, après l'échec d'un libéralisme de marché avec la mondialisation économique qui a montré ses limites, la religion est de retour pour représenter un point de référence pour les hommes et les femmes de plus en plus désorientés par une société en crise et incapables d'en sortir. L'Église catholique, en particulier, est donc redevenue un point d'ancrage auquel s'accrocher. Mais en Europe – en raison du phénomène de l'immigration massive – le christianisme est appelé, dans la vie de tous

les jours (construction de mosquées, de minarets, le crucifix dans les écoles, les prescriptions alimentaire dans les écoles etc.), à se confronter à la religion d'origine des migrants, la religion musulmane. Par ailleurs, à partir du moment où un islam fondamentaliste cherche à s'affirmer sur la scène mondiale, il est inévitable que la contrepartie redécouvre aussi ses racines judéo-chrétiennes. La solution, cependant, ne peut pas être d'opposer les crucifix aux mosquées et aux minarets, ou même la laïcité contre le crucifix et le foulard, mais réside dans la liberté religieuse pour tous, et le droit à la liberté d'expression publique dans la mesure où elle ne conduit pas à la haine, à la violence et à l'abus envers ceux qui ont des croyances différentes.

Il faut aussi compter avec une vision « idéaliste » qui continue de s'appuyer sur l'État, plus précisément dans sa forme constitutionnelle, qu'il assume comme « sa capacité d'accueil et d'intégration pluralistes à travers les principes de liberté et d'égalité ». L'État constitutionnel occupe des domaines qui relevaient auparavant de la morale et de la religion. La religion s'efforce aujourd'hui, en quelque sorte, de se les réapproprier. Au fond, le retour de la religion dans la sphère publique est aussi une réponse à la moralisation du droit qui, à son tour, devient évidente lorsque l'organisation constitutionnelle prétend légiférer sur toute existence humaine. Il est souvent dit que, de cette façon, l'Église voudrait imposer sa morale à tous les citoyens, mais à l'inverse ce serait plutôt l'État qui ne devrait pas exiger des croyants d'accomplir ces actes qu'ils jugent incompatibles avec leur foi.

Comment répondre alors au besoin authentique de religiosité sans tomber dans le conflit des fondamentalismes ? Sur quoi peut se baser la Constitution si elle veut échapper aux pièges du relativisme juridique ? Un principe universel capable de surmonter les particularismes des diverses vérités révélées, assumant en même temps la figure de *Grundnorm* au sommet des organisations positives pourrait se définir dans le *principium dignitatis* ; ce dernier permettant, d'une part, de conserver l'héritage plus profond de la civilisation judéo-chrétienne et, d'autre part, d'identifier un point de référence qui, contrairement à ce qui peut arriver dans le domaine des droits fondamentaux, n'est pas exposé au piège des pondérations et des limitations.

La théologie de l'homme créé à l'image de Dieu a ouvert la voie à une dignité potentiellement égalitaire. Cette idée n'implique pas le privilège de l'homme de foi parce que tout homme, indépendamment de l'adhésion ou de l'affiliation à une confession, par le simple fait d'être homme, est icône de Dieu. Du point de vue des différentes perspectives religieuses, bien que l'islam ait une conception de la dignité humaine autre que celle des deux autres grandes religions monothéistes, l'homme est porteur de dignité parce qu'il est le seul être créé à avoir accepté d'établir un pacte avec Dieu. Se référant à l'unicité de l'homme dans le dessein de création et à la responsabilité qui en dérive, la question de la dignité dans le dialogue interreligieux s'affirme comme d'une importance absolue.

Dans la section « Rapports/Communiqués de presse/Déclarations », le lecteur trouvera le texte du communiqué de presse concernant la 2ème Réunion des délégués des relations avec l'Islam en Europe du Conseil des Conférences épiscopales d'Europe (CCEE): « Vers une inculturation de l'islam » (31 mai - 1er juin). Le texte « Témoignage chrétien dans un monde multireligieux : recommandations de conduite », publié à Genève le 28 juin 2011, est précédé d'un rapport explicatif et suivi par un premier bilan d'évaluation. Un compte-rendu de la journée de réflexion, de dialogue et de prière pour la paix et la justice dans le monde, « Pèlerins de la vérité, pèlerins de la paix », qui s'est tenue à Assise le 27 octobre 2011, à 25 ans de la Rencontre historique voulues par le Bienheureux Jean-Paul II : le texte est accompagné de la publication complète des interventions du Pape Benoît XVI et d'autres responsables religieux, de la liste des Chefs de délégation et de la présentation officielle faite par le Bureau de Presse du Saint-Siège (27-28 octobre). Le rapport sur la visite du Conseil Pontifical pour le Dialogue interreligieux en Inde (6-13 novembre). Enfin, le communiqué de presse du 2ème Séminaire du Forum catholique-musulman sur « Raison, foi et personne humaine », célébré sur le site du baptême du Seigneur en Jordanie (21-23 novembre).

Dans la section consacrée aux Messages apparaissent : le texte du Message de vœux adressé aux musulmans pour la fin du Ramadan: « Chrétiens et Musulmans : promouvoir la dimension spirituelle de l'homme » (19 août) ; le texte des Messages de vœux pour la fête hindoue de Deepavali: « Chrétiens et Hindous : ensemble pour la promotion de la liberté religieuse » (20 octobre) ; aux Sikhs pour l'anniversaire de la naissance de Siri Guru Nanak Sahib: « Chrétiens et Sikhs : collaborer à l'édification d'une société harmonieuse » (29 octobre).

Enfin, à la section « Nouvelles », on trouvera un compte rendu de la 40ème Réunion des commissions de la Région européenne pour le dialogue interreligieux monastique (DIM-MID) (Saint Jacques de Compostelle, 29 août – 2 septembre) ; un rapport sur la Rencontre des moines zen du Village des Pruniers avec les moines de Solesmes (Solesmes, 26 septembre-1er octobre) ; un rapport sur la Conférence interreligieuse sur le changement climatique, qui s'est tenu au Bangladesh (8 octobre) et, enfin, un compte rendu de la visite d'une délégation jaïniste au siège du Conseil Pontifical pour le Dialogue interreligieux (Rome, 6 décembre).

En vous priant d'accepter ses excuses pour le retard avec lequel le présent Bulletin est publié, la Rédaction exprime dès à présent sa gratitude à ceux qui souhaiteront présenter des nouvelles des initiatives de dialogue interreligieux, en particulier celles menées au niveau ecclésial national, ainsi que tout autre approfondissement significatif sur ce même thème.

In questo volume

Vengono qui presentati i contenuti più significativi di questo numero del Bollettino "Pro-Dialogo", che copre il periodo da giugno a dicembre del 2011.

Sono riportati, anzitutto, brani d'interventi del Santo Padre che, in varie occasioni, ha toccato alcuni aspetti del dialogo interreligioso: 1) Al nuovo Ambasciatore di Siria ha ricordato la necessità che le riforme urgenti nella vita politica e socio-economica del Paese avvengano in un clima di rispetto della verità e dei diritti legittimi degli individui e dei gruppi, e non attraverso la violenza o il conflitto (9 giugno); 2) Rispondendo a una domanda dei giornalisti durante il volo per Madrid in occasione della Giornata Mondiale della Gioventù, il Santo Padre ha illustrato il legame inscindibile tra verità e libertà, fondato sul fatto che la verità non si può imporre, ma solo accogliere liberamente. La verità è dialogica, perché cerca di conoscere e comprendere meglio attraverso il dialogo con altri (18 agosto); 3) Nel Messaggio inviato ai partecipanti all'Incontro di Preghiera per la Pace organizzato dalla Comunità di Sant'Egidio a Monaco di Baviera dall'11 al 13 settembre, Benedetto XVI ha chiesto alle religioni d'interrogarsi su come promuovere la coesistenza pacifica a livello mondiale e di vigilare sulle distorsioni dell'immagine di Dio, perché se le religioni non incontrano il mistero divino, finiscono col distruggere la pace invece di costruirla. La ricerca della pace è un mandato permanente e un dono da implorare (1 settembre); 4) Ai Vescovi dell'India in visita *ad Limina,* ha ricordato che la dignità della persona umana è un dono del Creatore e li ha incoraggiati a tutelarla in dialogo con gli altri cristiani e con i seguaci delle altre tradizioni religiose (19 settembre); 5) Nel Messaggio per la Giornata Mondiale dei Migranti, il Pontefice ha messo in rilievo l'impatto delle migrazioni interne e internazionali sulla società non solo dal punto di vista umano, ma anche etico, religioso e spirituale (21 settembre); 6) Durante il Viaggio Apostolico in Germania, in occasione dell'incontro con la comunità musulmana a Berlino, il Santo Padre ha spiegato che la Costituzione tedesca, ispirandosi alla visione cristiana dell'uomo, ha riconosciuto i diritti inalienabili della persona umana, che precedono ogni formulazione positiva. In un contesto pluralistico come quello attuale, cristiani e musulmani possono costruire una società diversa da quella del passato e, partendo dalle loro rispettive convinzioni, possono offrire una testimonianza importante in molte aree vitali, come la protezione della famiglia fondata sul matrimonio, il rispetto della vita, e la promozione di una maggiore giustizia sociale (23 settembre), impegno ribadito in occasione

della successiva Udienza generale in Piazza San Pietro (28 settembre); 7) Ai Vescovi dell'Indonesia in visita *ad Limina,* il papa ha rivolto un'esortazione a radicarsi nella carità per superare le incomprensioni e la sfiducia nell'impegno per il dialogo interreligioso (7 ottobre); 8) Ai Vescovi di Angola e São Tomé e Príncipe, giunti anch'essi a Roma in visita *ad Limina,* il Santo Padre ha posto il problema pastorale dei battezzati, divisi ancora tra l'adesione al Vangelo e certe pratiche della religione tradizionale africana incompatibili con la sequela di Cristo (29 ottobre); 9) Ai Membri del Consiglio Religioso Israeliano, ricordando la delicatezza della missione dei capi religiosi in Terra Santa, Benedetto XVI ha ricordato che oggi ci si deve confrontare con due tipi di violenza; quella esercitata in nome della religione, nonché quella che è conseguenza del rifiuto di Dio, frequente nella società moderna (10 novembre); 10) Nel Viaggio Apostolico in Benin il tema del dialogo interreligioso è stato ricorrente: durante il volo verso Cotonou, il Santo Padre ha elogiato il clima di mutuo rispetto tra cristiani di diverse confessioni, musulmani, e adepti della religione tradizionale, e il loro comune impegno per la pace e la riconciliazione (18 novembre); Ai membri del Governo, ai rappresentanti delle istituzioni, ai diplomatici e ai capi religiosi, il papa ha detto che il vero dialogo interreligioso rifiuta la verità incentrata su se stessi, perché l'unica verità è Dio. Servirsi della parola rivelata per giustificare i propri interessi, certe politiche o la violenza è una colpa molto grave. Il dialogo non si persegue per debolezza o ingenuità, e la speranza riposta nell'uomo è un atto di fede in Dio, Signore della storia e del nostro futuro (19 novembre); lasciando il Benin, all'aeroporto di Cotonou, egli ha infine auspicato che un Paese africano indichi al resto del mondo la strada che conduce a vivere un'autentica fraternità nella giustizia, fondata sull'importanza della famiglia e del lavoro (20 novembre); 11) La pubblicazione dell'Esortazione Apostolica *Africae Munus* ha offerto al Santo Padre Benedetto XVI l'occasione di incoraggiare la Chiesa africana ad un rinnovato slancio per l'inculturazione del Vangelo, il dialogo interreligioso, soprattutto con l'islam e con i seguaci della religione tradizionale, e l'evangelizzazione attraverso la testimonianza del servizio reso alla riconciliazione, alla giustizia, e alla pace (19 novembre); 12) Ai partecipanti al Congresso mondiale della Pastorale degli studenti internazionali, il papa ha detto che il terreno più fertile per il dialogo tra chi è alla ricerca di un autentico umanesimo è l'incontro tra le culture. Nelle università esso va sostenuto ponendo alla base quei principi umani e cristiani indispensabili per elevare una nuova generazione capace di dialogo e discernimento, e impegnata a diffondere rispetto e cooperazione per la pace e lo sviluppo (2 dicembre).

Seguono i discorsi del Presidente su temi di grande attualità. Nell'Omelia in occasione dell'Assemblea delle Conferenze Episcopali Europee (CEE), il Cardinale

Tauran ha spiegato che il pluralismo religioso fa parte del disegno misterioso di Dio (Cattedrale di Torino, 1° giugno). Intervenendo in rappresentanza di S.S. Benedetto XVI a una Conferenza internazionale sui Cristiani in Terra Santa (Lambeth Palace, Londra, 19 luglio), egli ha parlato della vocazione dei cristiani a fare da ponte: dai tempi di Caino e Abele, nel cuore dell'uomo albergano l'esclusivismo e il desiderio di sicurezza, ma sia la storia che le religioni insegnano che vi è un solo futuro per tutti, ed è un futuro condiviso. Molti musulmani – ha argomentato – si preoccupano per il futuro dei cristiani nel vicino Oriente, perché sanno che i cristiani li possono aiutare a comprendere la modernità e a riconciliare diversità e unità.

In un'intervista rilasciata al mensile *Tracce* (ottobre 2011), in preparazione al Pellegrinaggio di Assisi, il Presidente del PCDI ha affermato che la libertà di religione supera di gran lunga la libertà di culto. È la possibilità di partecipare al dialogo pubblico in qualità di credenti. La libertà di religione, quindi, è una forza per la pace. Credenti che si mettono in pellegrinaggio insieme, che meditano in silenzio sulla propria comune origine e sul proprio comune destino, sui propri limiti e sulle proprie responsabilità, sono una risorsa per l'intera comunità umana e un invito ad apprezzare le grandi tradizioni culturali aperte alla trascendenza, che esprimono così bene la nostra aspirazione alla verità e alla libertà.

Allo scopo di rafforzare le relazioni tra la Chiesa cattolica con gli aderenti delle altre tradizioni religiose, il Cardinale Jean-Louis Tauran ha compiuto dal 6 al 13 novembre una visita in India, durante la quale ha pronunciato vari discorsi di grande interesse per il tema del dialogo interreligioso. In particolare, ha invitato i musulmani a unire i nostri sforzi, in quanto credenti, per le comuni preoccupazioni circa gli attuali modelli di sviluppo, la vita interculturale e i relativi conflitti, la giustizia, e l'ecologia (Mumbai, 6 novembre); rivolgendosi agli induisti, ha fatto proprio l'appello già rivolto dal Beato Giovanni Paolo II nel 1986 ai capi religiosi e agli intellettuali dell'India a "eliminare fame, povertà, ignoranza, persecuzione, discriminazione e ogni forma di schiavitù dello spirito umano", nella consapevolezza che sarà difficile garantire alla società una pace durevole fin quando non saranno soddisfatte le necessità basilari e i diritti fondamentali delle persona umana (Jnana Deepa Vidyapeeth, Pune, 6 novembre); nell'Incontro interreligioso che si è svolto a Vigyan Bhavan, Nuova Delhi, ha rivolto a tutti i presenti, in particolare induisti e sikh, un invito a crescere nella comprensione reciproca per costruire una pace durevole, che è il requisito preliminare di ogni progresso umano, artistico e culturale (Nuova Delhi, 10 novembre); nel Tempio aureo di Amritsar, si è rivolto ai sikh, invitandoli a coltivare la collaborazione con i credenti delle tradizioni religiose diverse (Amritsar, 11 novembre), tema che ha successi-

vamente approfondito in occasione del Seminario sikh-cristiano davanti a una platea di studenti universitari, ai quali non ha nascosto le difficoltà della sfida posta ai credenti tra due estremi: i fondamentalisti religiosi, che propagano una cultura di odio e di violenza, e i fautori del secolarismo, che si prendono gioco delle religioni ritenendole obsolete, dimenticando che facciamo tutti parte di una sola famiglia umana e siamo obbligati a vivere e collaborare per una fratellanza universale sotto l'unica paternità di Dio (Guru Nanak Dev University, Amritsar, 12 novembre); anche ai giainisti, che ha incontrato presso il Sushil Muni Ashram, Delhi, il Card. Tauran ha rivolto un invito a collaborare con i cristiani per promuovere la giustizia, la pace e l'armonia sulla base dell'*Ahimsa,* il principio morale del non arrecare offesa alla vita (Delhi, 13 novembre).

Intervenendo a un Colloquio internazionale promosso dall'Ambasciata di Francia presso la Santa Sede, con una relazione su "I cristiani d'Oriente nel dialogo islamo-cristiano", il Presidente del PCDI ha evidenziato che quei cristiani, "discendenti della prima Chiesa di Gerusalemme", che circondano letteralmente con la loro presenza i luoghi santi, evitando che questi si riducano a semplici musei, devono purtroppo scegliere la via dell'emigrazione, perché – in un contesto segnato dalla mancata risoluzione del conflitto israelo-palestinese e dalle manifestazioni di un islam aggressivo – non vedono un futuro dei loro figli. Eppure, cristianesimo, islam ed ebraismo favoriscono una pedagogia dell'incontro e condividono valori comuni, quali il rispetto della vita, il senso della fraternità, e la dimensione religiosa dell'esistenza, che possono favorire il bene comune delle nostre società pluralistiche (Centre Saint-Louis, Roma, 2 dicembre).

In apertura della sezione del Bollettino riservata ai testi di varia natura, il lettore troverà, innanzitutto, la relazione su "L'etica dell'uso della nuova tecnologia" pronunciata da S. E. Mons. Patrick Kelly, Arcivescovo di Liverpool, alla IX Conferenza sul Dialogo Interreligioso di Doha, Qatar, sul rapporto tra i mezzi di comunicazione sociale e il Dialogo Interreligioso (24-26 ottobre). Le nuove tecnologie permettono di comunicare con grande velocità – ha argomentato Mons. Kelly – ma è necessario servirsene con sapienza e senso di responsabilità, e non in modo emotivo o superficiale, con la preoccupazione della "Verità".

Seguono, poi, i contributi della parte cattolica al II Seminario del Forum cattolico-musulmano su "Ragione, fede e persona umana", che si è svolto in Giordania, sul sito del Battesimo del Signore (21-23 novembre).

Il primo relatore, François Bousquet, Professore all'Institut Catholique di Parigi, ha svolto il tema « La persona umana alla luce della fede cristiana ». Partendo dagli studi di Paul Ricœur, il relatore ha sviluppato i seguenti punti : a)

il Dio unico come unificatore della persona ; b) la persona ragionevole e credente : fede e ragione come obbedienza e ascolto; c) secondo il cuore di Dio, ogni persona è unica e tutti sono solidali. Dio crea per godere di un'altra comunione, come nella vita trinitaria, ma con un essere di natura differente. "La nostra fede in Dio creatore e nel Verbo incarnato ci riconduce senza posa alla realtà carnale e alle nostre responsabilità per la condivisione e la protezione della vita : la lotta contro la fame, per la salute, l'ecologia, la giustizia, la pace a cominciare dal prenderci cura del nostro prossimo".

Il secondo relatore, Vittorio Possenti, docente all'Università di Venezia, ha sviluppato il tema: "Ragione, fede e persona" in prospettiva cristiana. La ragione è il fondamento di ogni dialogo, incluso il dialogo interreligioso. E' la natura umana che fa delle persone degli esseri dotati di dignità. Essendo dotato d'intelletto e di volontà, l'essere umano è capace di conoscere il bene e il male in virtù della ragion pratica e della legge morale naturale. La coscienza morale rappresenta la manifestazione più immediata dell'umano. L'irruzione nella cultura dell'idea di persona e della dignità che ad essa è dovuta, con il necessario riconoscimento di diritti e doveri, è foriera di promettenti sviluppi nel dialogo interreligioso, che riguarda Dio e l'uomo, e lo statuto concreto della persona con i suoi diritti e doveri.

Viene infine pubblicato un contributo sul "Risveglio di Dio", non privo di provocazioni intellettuali e pratiche, redatto da Paolo Becchi, docente all'Università di Genova. Il risveglio di Dio è al contempo il risveglio dell'uomo, che rischiava di rimanere prigioniero di un incubo: quello della "morte di dio" e, con lui, della morte dell'uomo. Una delle novità salienti del nuovo millennio è, infatti, il ritorno della religione sulla scena pubblica come reazione all'inaridimento di senso provocato dalla secolarizzazione. Ma il nodo fondamentale è quello del confronto tra religione e politica. Crollata la fiducia nelle ideologie politiche dominanti nel secolo scorso con il collasso del "socialismo reale" e dopo il fallimento di un liberalismo del mercato che con la globalizzazione economica ha mostrato tutti i suoi limiti, la religione è tornata a rappresentare un punto di riferimento per uomini e donne sempre più disorientati da una società in crisi e incapace di uscirne. La Chiesa cattolica, in particolare, è così tornata ad essere un punto fermo a cui aggrapparsi. Ma in Europa – a seguito del massiccio fenomeno dell'immigrazione – il cristianesimo è chiamato, nella vita di tutti i giorni (costruzioni di moschee e minareti, crocefisso nelle scuole, dieta alimentare negli asili, etc.), a confrontarsi con la religione di provenienza dei migranti che è in prevalenza musulmana. Nel momento in cui da una parte l'Islam fondamentalista cerca di affermarsi sulla scena del mondo, è inevitabile che dall'altra parte si riscoprano le radici giudaico-cristiane. La soluzione, tuttavia, non può essere crocefissi contro moschee e minareti e neppure laicità contro crocefisso e velo islamico, ma ampia

libertà religiosa per tutti, e diritto alla sua libera espressione pubblica purché ciò non comporti odio, violenza e prevaricazione nei confronti di coloro che hanno convinzioni differenti.

Vi è poi la via "idealista", che continua a far affidamento sullo Stato, e precisamente nella forma costituzionale che esso ora ha assunto "con la sua capacità di accoglienza e d'integrazione pluralista tramite principi di libertà e di uguaglianza". Lo Stato costituzionale ha occupato territori che prima erano di competenza della morale e della religione, e la religione oggi cerca in qualche modo di riappropriarsene. In fondo il ritorno della religione nella sfera pubblica è anche una risposta alla moralizzazione del diritto che diventa evidente nel momento in cui l'organizzazione costituzionale ha la pretesa di giuridificare l'intera esistenza umana. Si dice che in questo modo la Chiesa vorrebbe imporre la sua morale a tutti i cittadini, ma è piuttosto lo Stato che non può esigere dai credenti il compimento di azioni ritenute incompatibili con la propria fede.

Come soddisfare allora il bisogno autentico di religiosità senza cadere nel conflitto tra i fondamentalismi? Su cosa può reggersi la Costituzione se vuole sfuggire alle trappole del relativismo giudiziale? Un principio universale in grado di superare i particolarismi delle diverse verità rivelate, assumendo nel contempo il ruolo di una sorta di *Grundnorm* al vertice delle organizzazioni positive, si potrebbe riconoscere nel "*principium dignitatis*", il quale da un lato consente di conservare l'eredità più profonda della civiltà giudaico-cristiana e, dall'altro, di individuare un punto di riferimento che, a differenza dei diritti fondamentali, non è esposto alla trappola delle ponderazioni e delle limitazioni.

La teologia dell'uomo creato a immagine di Dio ha aperto la via ad una lettura potenzialmente egualitaria della dignità. Questa idea non implica il privilegio dell'uomo di fede poiché ogni uomo, indipendentemente dalla confessione di appartenenza o anche se non appartiene ad alcuna confessione, per il solo fatto di essere uomo, è un'icona di Dio. Dal punto di vista delle diverse prospettive religiose, anche se l'Islam ha una concezione della dignità diversa da quella delle due altre grandi religioni monoteiste, anche per esso l'uomo è titolare di dignità poiché è l'unico essere del creato ad aver accettato di stringere un patto con Dio. Riferendosi all'unicità dell'uomo nel disegno della creazione e alla responsabilità che da ciò deriva, l'appello alla dignità diventa di assoluto rilievo nel dialogo interreligioso.

Nella Sezione "Rapporti/Comunicati Stampa/Dichiarazioni" il lettore troverà il testo del Comunicato Stampa riguardante il II Incontro dei Delegati per le Relazioni con l'Islam in Europa del Consiglio delle Conferenze Episcopali d'Europa (CCEE): "Verso un'inculturazione dell'islam" (31 maggio – 1° giugno); il testo "Testimonianza cristiana in un mondo multi-religioso: raccomandazioni di

condotta", pubblicato a Ginevra il 28 giugno, preceduto da un rapporto esplicativo e seguito da un primo bilancio di valutazione; un resoconto sulla Giornata di riflessione, dialogo e preghiera per la pace e la giustizia nel mondo "Pellegrini di Verità, pellegrini di Pace", celebrata ad Assisi il 27 ottobre a 25 anni dallo storico incontro voluto dal Beato Giovanni Paolo II: tale rapporto è accompagnato dalla pubblicazione integrale degli interventi del Santo Padre Benedetto XVI e degli altri leader religiosi ad Assisi, dalla lista dei capi-delegazione, e dai comunicati ufficiali di presentazione della Sala stampa della Santa Sede (27-28 ottobre); il rapporto sulla visita del Pontificio Consiglio del Dialogo Interreligioso in India (6-13 novembre); e, infine, il comunicato stampa del II Seminario del Forum cattolico-musulmano su "Ragione, fede, e persona umana" celebrato sul sito del Battesimo del Signore in Giordania (21-23 novembre).

Nella Sezione dedicata ai Messaggi sono riportati: il testo degli auguri indirizzati ai musulmani per la fine del Ramadan: "Cristiani e musulmani: operare insieme per la dimensione spirituale dell'umanità" (19 agosto); il testo degli auguri agli induisti per la festa di Deepavali: "Cristiani e induisti: insieme per la promozione della libertà religiosa" (20 ottobre); il messaggio ai sikh in occasione dell'anniversario della nascita di Siri Guru Nanak Sahib: "Cristiani e sikh: collaborare alla costruzione di una società armoniosa" (29 ottobre).

Nella Sezione "Notizie" viene offerto un resoconto della 40ma Riunione delle commissioni della Regione europea del Dialogo Interreligioso Monastico (DIM-MID) (Santiago de Compostela, 29 agosto – 2 settembre); un rapporto sull'incontro dei monaci zen del Village des Pruniers con i monaci di Solesmes (Solesmes, 26 settembre – 1° ottobre); un rapporto sulla conferenza interreligiosa sul cambiamento climatico, che ha avuto luogo in Bangladesh (8 ottobre); e, infine, un resoconto della visita della Delegazione giainista alla Sede del Pontificio Consiglio per il Dialogo Interreligioso (Roma, 6 dicembre).

Scusandosi per il relativo ritardo con il quale questo Bollettino viene pubblicato, la Redazione esprime fin d'ora la sua gratitudine a quanti vorranno far pervenire notizie su iniziative di dialogo interreligioso, in particolare quelle svolte a livello ecclesiale nazionale, e contributi significativi di approfondimento sullo stesso tema.

Clementine Hall, Thursday, 9 June

To H.E. Mr Hussan Edin Aala, new Ambassador of the Syrian Arab Republic*

The events that have occurred in recent months in which some countries surrounding the Mediterranean — including Syria — demonstrated the desire for a better future in the areas of economy, justice, freedom and participation in public life. These events also show the urgent need for real reforms in the country's political, economic and social life. It is nevertheless highly desirable that these developments do not take place through intolerance, discrimination or conflict, and even less through violence, but rather through absolute respect for truth, for coexistence, for the legitimate rights of individuals and groups, as well as for reconciliation. Such principles must guide leaders while taking account the aspirations of civil society as well as of the international authorities.

Mr Ambassador, I would like to emphasize here the positive role Christians have in your country; as citizens, they are engaged in the building of a society where all may find their place. I cannot fail to mention the Catholic Church's service in the social and educational sectors, which is appreciated by everyone. May I be permitted to offer a very special greeting to the faithful of the Catholic communities, with their bishops, and to encourage them to nourish the bonds of brotherhood with everyone. Daily relations with their Muslim compatriots shed light on the importance of interreligious dialogue and on the possibility of working together — in many ways — for the common good. May the impetus given by the recent Special Assembly for the Middle East of the Synod of Bishops yield abundant fruit in your country, for the benefit of the entire population, and an authentic reconciliation among peoples!

* For full text and translations, see: http://www.vatican.va/holy_father/benedict_xvi/speeches/2011/june/documents/hf_ben-xvi_spe_20110609_ambassador-syrie_en.html

APOSTOLIC JOURNEY TO MADRID ON THE OCCASION OF THE 26th WORLD YOUTH DAY (18-21 AUGUST 2011)

Papal Flight, Thursday, 18 August

Interview of the Holy Father Benedict XVI with the journalists during the flight to Madrid**

Fr Federico Lombardi, SJ: *Youth today generally live in multi-cultural and multi-denominational milieus. Reciprocal tolerance is more necessary than ever. You stress the importance of truth. Do you not think that this insistence on truth and on the one Truth which is Christ is a problem for the young today? Don't you think that this insistence might lead to opposition and to difficulty in dialogue and in seeking together with others?*

The Holy Father: The connection between truth and intolerance, monotheism and the incapacity for dialogue with others is a subject that recurs frequently in the discussion on Christianity today. And, of course, it is true that in history there have been instances of abuse, both of the concept of truth and of the concept of monotheism; but there has been abuse. The reality is totally different. The hypothesis is erroneous because truth is only accessible in freedom. It is possible to impose forms of conduct, observance or activity with violence, but not truth!

Truth is only open to freedom, to free consent, and therefore freedom and truth are closely tied, the one is a condition for the other. Besides, there is no alternative to seeking the truth, the true values that give life and a future: we do not want falsehood, we do not want the positivism of norms imposed with a certain force; true values alone lead to the future; and let us say that it is therefore necessary to seek true values and not to permit the arbitrariness of the few, not to let a positivist reason be established which tells us, concerning ethical problems, the great problems of humanity: that there is no rational truth. This would really be exposing man to the will of those in power. We must always be in search of the truth, of true values; we have a nucleus in the fundamental values, in human rights; other similar fundamental elements are recognized and precisely these put us in dialogue with one another. The truth as such is dialogical because

** For full text and translations, see: http://www.vatican.va/holy_father/benedict_xvi/speeches/2011/august/documents/hf_ben-xvi_spe_20110818_intervista-madrid_en.html

it seeks to know better, to understand better and does so in dialogue with others. Thus, seeking the truth and the dignity of the human being is the greatest guarantee of freedom.

From Castel Gandolfo, 1 September

International Meeting of Prayer for Peace "Bound To Live Together": Religions and Cultures in Dialogue (Munich, 11 - 13 September 2011)*

In a few weeks we will be celebrating the 25th anniversary of Blessed John Paul II's invitation to representatives of the world's different religions to gather in Assisi for an international meeting to pray for peace. Starting from that memorable event, year after year the Community of Sant'Egidio has organized a meeting for peace in order to deepen the spirit of peace and reconciliation so that God, through prayer, will make us people of peace.

I am glad that this year's meeting is taking place in Munich, where I was bishop, on the eve of my journey to Germany and in preparation for the ceremony to commemorate the 25th anniversary of the World Prayer for Peace in Assisi that will be celebrated next October. I willingly assure the organizers and participants in the Munich meeting of my spiritual closeness and I warmly address to all my good wishes that it will be blessed.

The theme of the meeting for peace, "Bound to Live Together" reminds us that we human beings are bound to each other. This social dimension is basically a simple aptitude that derives directly from our human condition. It is therefore our task to give it a positive slant. Living together can turn into living in antagonism, it can become hell if we do not learn to accept each other and if no one wants to be anything other than himself.

However, opening oneself to others and offering oneself to others can also be a gift. Thus everything depends on viewing the propensity for living together as a commitment and a gift and on finding the true way to coexist. Today this coexistence, which could once be restricted to a single region, cannot but be lived at a universal level. Today, the subject of coexistence is the whole of humanity.

* For full text and translations, see: http://www.vatican.va/holy_father/benedict_xvi/letters/2011/documents/hf_ben-xvi_let_20110901_card-marx_en.html

Meetings such as the one held in Assisi and the one being held in Munich at this time are opportunities in which religions can question themselves and ask themselves how to promote peaceful coexistence.

When we gather as Christians, let us remember that for biblical faith God is the creator of all human beings; indeed, God wants us to form one family in which we are all brothers and sisters. Let us remember that Christ proclaimed peace to those near and far (Eph 2:16 ff). We must never cease to learn it. The fundamental meaning of these encounters is that we should address those near and far in the same spirit of peace that Christ showed us. We must learn to live with each other rather than beside each other, namely, we must learn to open our hearts to others, to enable others to share in our joys, hopes and anxieties.

The heart is the place in which the Lord makes himself close to us. This is why religion, which is focused on the encounter of the human being with the divine mystery, is essentially linked to the question of peace. If religion fails to bring about the encounter with God, if it brings God down to our level instead of raising us up to him, if in a certain sense it makes him our property, then in that way it can contribute to the disintegration of peace. If instead it leads to the divine, to the Creator and Redeemer of all human beings, then it becomes a force for peace.

We know that in Christianity too there have been real distortions of the image of God that have led to the disruption of peace which is all the more reason to allow the divine God to purify us, to become people of peace. We must never fail in our joint effort for peace. This is why the many initiatives across the world, such as Sant'Egidio's annual prayer meeting for peace, and other similar projects are so valuable. The field in which the fruit of peace should flourish must always be cultivated We are often unable to do anything more than ceaselessly prepare the ground for peace, within us and around us, taking many small steps, mindful of the great challenges that humanity as a whole — not the individual — must reckon with, such as migration, globalization, economic crises and the safeguard of creation.

Yet ultimately we know that peace is not simply "achieved" but is always also "given". "Peace is a gift of God and at the same time a task which is never fully completed" (*Message for World Day of Peace 2011*, n. 15). For this very reason it is necessary for the common witness of all who seek God with a pure heart, to achieve increasingly the idea of peaceful coexistence among all human beings. Since the first Meeting in Assisi 25 years ago, there have been turning points and many projects are being put into practice for reconciliation and peace which fill us with hope.

Unfortunately, however, there have also been many opportunities missed and many steps back. Terrible acts of violence and terrorism have repeatedly suffocated the hope of a peaceful coexistence of the human family at the dawn of the third

millennium. Some old conflicts smoulder under the ashes or flare up anew, and in addition there are new clashes and new problems.

All this clearly shows us that peace is a permanent mandate entrusted to us and at the same time a gift to be invoked.

Consistory Hall, Castel Gandolfo, 19 September

To Bishops of the Episcopal Conference of India on their "Ad Limina" Visit*

I note with gratitude the various efforts the local churches in India have made in commemoration of the twenty-fifth anniversary of the first Apostolic Visit of Pope John Paul II to your country. During those memorable days, he had several notable encounters with leaders of other religious traditions. Manifesting his personal respect for his interlocutors, this blessed Pope gave an authentic witness to the value of interreligious dialogue. I renew the sentiments he expressed so well, "To work for the attainment and preservation of all human rights, including the basic right to worship God according to the dictates of an upright conscience and to profess that faith externally, must become ever more a subject of interreligious collaboration at all levels" (John Paul II, *Meeting with Representatives of the different religious and cultural traditions and with the youth at the Indira Gandhi Stadium*, 2 February 1986). I encourage you, dear brothers, to carry forward the Church's efforts to promote the well-being of Indian society through continued attention to the promotion of basic rights – rights shared by all humanity – and by inviting your fellow Christians and the followers of other religious traditions to take up the challenge of affirming the dignity of each and every human person. This dignity, expressed in respect for and promotion of the innate moral, spiritual and material rights of the person, is not merely a concession granted by any earthly authority. It is the gift of the Creator, and stems from the fact that we are created in his image and likeness. I pray that the followers of Christ in India will continue to be promoters of justice, bearers of peace, people of respectful dialogue, and lovers of the truth about God and about man.

* For full text and translations, see: http://www.vatican.va/holy_father/benedict_xvi/speeches/2011/september/documents/hf_ben-xvi_spe_20110919_bishops-india_en.html

From the Vatican, 21 September

Message of His Holiness Pope Benedict XVI for the World Day of Migrants and Refugees**

Blessed John Paul II invited us to "nourish ourselves with the word in order to be 'servants of the word' in the work of evangelization ... [in] a situation which is becoming increasingly diversified and demanding, in the context of 'globalization' and of the consequent new and uncertain mingling of peoples and cultures" (*Novo Millennio Ineunte*, 40). Internal or international migration, in fact, as an opening in search of better living conditions or to flee from the threat of persecution, war, violence, hunger or natural disasters, has led to an unprecedented mingling of individuals and peoples, with new problems not only from the human standpoint but also from ethical, religious and spiritual ones. The current and obvious consequences of secularization, the emergence of new sectarian movements, widespread insensitivity to the Christian faith and a marked tendency to fragmentation are obstacles to focusing on a unifying reference that would encourage the formation of "one family of brothers and sisters in societies that are becoming ever more multi-ethnic and intercultural, where also people of various religions are urged to take part in dialogue, so that a serene and fruitful coexistence with respect for legitimate differences may be found", as I wrote in my Message last year for this World Day. Our time is marked by endeavours to efface God and the Church's teaching from the horizon of life, while doubt, scepticism and indifference are creeping in, seeking to eliminate all the social and symbolic visibility of the Christian faith.

** For full text and translations, see: http://www.vatican.va/holy_father/benedict_xvi/messages/migration/documents/hf_ben-xvi_mes_20110921_world-migrants-day_en.html

APOSTOLIC JOURNEY TO GERMANY
(22-25 SEPTEMBER 2011)

Reception room of the Apostolic Nunciature, Berlin, 23 September

Meeting with Muslim Communities*

I am glad to be able to welcome you here, as the representatives of different Muslim communities in Germany. I thank Professor Mohammed Khorchide most sincerely for his kind greetings and for the profound reflections that he shared with us. His words illustrate what a climate of respect and trust has grown up between the Catholic Church and the Muslim communities in Germany and how the convictions we share are becoming visible.

Berlin is a good place for a meeting like this, not only because the oldest mosque in Germany is located here, but also because Berlin has the largest Muslim population of all the cities in Germany.

From the 1970s onwards, the presence of numerous Muslim families has increasingly become a distinguishing mark of this country. Constant effort is needed in order to foster better mutual acquaintance and understanding. Not only is this important for peaceful coexistence, but also for the contribution that each can make towards building up the common good in this society.

Many Muslims attribute great importance to the religious dimension of life. At times this is thought provocative in a society that tends to marginalize religion or at most to assign it a place among the individual's private choices.

The Catholic Church firmly advocates that due recognition be given to the public dimension of religious adherence. In an overwhelmingly pluralist society, this demand is not unimportant. In the process, care must be taken to guarantee that the other is always treated with respect. This mutual respect grows only on the basis of agreement on certain inalienable values that are proper to human nature, in particular the inviolable dignity of every single person as created by God. Such agreement does not limit the expression of individual religions; on the contrary, it allows each person to bear witness explicitly to what he believes, not avoiding comparison with others.

In Germany – as in many other countries, not only Western ones – this common

* For full text and translations, see: http://www.vatican.va/holy_father/benedict_xvi/speeches/2011/september/documents/hf_ben-xvi_spe_20110923_muslim-berlin_en.html

frame of reference is articulated by the Constitution, whose juridical content is binding on every citizen, whether he belong to a faith community or not.

Naturally, discussion over the best formulation of principles like freedom of public worship is vast and open-ended, yet it is significant that the German Basic Law expresses them in a way that is still valid today at a distance of over sixty years (cf. Art. 4:2). In this law we find above all the common ethos that lies at the heart of human coexistence and that also in a certain way pervades the apparently formal rules of operation of the institutions of democratic life.

We could ask ourselves how such a text – drawn up in a radically different historical epoch, that is to say in an almost uniformly Christian cultural situation – is also suited to present-day Germany, situated as it is within a globalized world and marked as it is by a remarkable degree of pluralism in the area of religious belief.

The reason for this seems to me to lie in the fact that the fathers of the Basic Law at that important moment were fully conscious of the need to find truly solid ground with which all citizens would be able to identify and which could serve as the supporting foundation for everyone, irrespective of their differences. In seeking this, mindful of human dignity and responsibility before God, they did not prescind from their own religious beliefs; indeed for many of them, the real source of inspiration was the Christian vision of man. But they knew that everyone has to engage with the followers of other religions and none: common ground for all was found in the recognition of some inalienable rights that are proper to human nature and precede every positive formulation.

In this way, a society which at that time was essentially homogenous laid the foundations that we today may consider valid for a markedly pluralistic era, foundations that actually point out the evident limits of pluralism: it is inconceivable, in fact, that a society could survive in the long term without consensus on fundamental ethical values.

Dear friends, on the basis of what I have outlined here, it seems to me that there can be fruitful collaboration between Christians and Muslims. In the process, we help to build a society that differs in many respects from what we brought with us from the past. As believers, setting out from our respective convictions, we can offer an important witness in many key areas of life in society. I am thinking, for example, of the protection of the family based on marriage, respect for life in every phase of its natural course or the promotion of greater social justice.

This is another reason why I think it important to hold a day of reflection, dialogue and prayer for peace and justice in the world, which as you know we plan to do on 27 October next in Assisi, twenty-five years after the historic meeting there led by my predecessor, Blessed Pope John Paul II. Through this gathering,

we wish to express, with simplicity, that we believers have a special contribution to make towards building a better world, while acknowledging that if our actions are to be effective, we need to grow in dialogue and mutual esteem.

St. Peter's Square 28 September

General Audience*

As you know, from Thursday to Sunday last I made a Pastoral Visit to Germany. I had a meeting with some representatives of Germany's Jewish community. Recalling our common roots in faith in the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, we highlighted the results obtained so far in the dialogue between the Catholic Church and Judaism in Germany. I was likewise able to meet several members of the Muslim community, and to agree with them on the importance of religious freedom for humanity's peaceful development.

Consistory Hall, 7 October

To the Bishops of Indonesia on their "Ad Limina" Visit**

I can only encourage you in your continuing efforts to promote and sustain interreligious dialogue in your nation. Your country, so rich in its cultural diversity and possessed of a large population, is home to significant numbers of followers of various religious traditions. Thus, the people of Indonesia are well-placed to make important contributions to the quest for peace and understanding among the peoples of the world. Your participation in this great enterprise is decisive, and so I urge you, dear brothers, to ensure that those whom you shepherd know that they, as Christians, are to be agents of peace, perseverance and charity. The Church is called to follow her Divine Master, who unites all things in himself, and to witness to that peace which only he can give. This is the precious fruit of charity in

* For full text and translations, see: http://www.vatican.va/holy_father/benedict_xvi/audiences/2011/documents/hf_ben-xvi_aud_20110928_en.html

** For full text and translations, see: http://www.vatican.va/holy_father/benedict_xvi/speeches/2011/october/documents/hf_ben-xvi_spe_20111007_bishops-indonesia_en.html

him who, suffering unjustly, gave us his life and taught us to respond in all situations with forgiveness, mercy and love in truth. Believers in Christ, rooted in charity, ought to be committed to dialogue with other religions, respecting mutual differences. Common endeavors for the upbuilding of society will be of great value when they strengthen friendships and overcome misunderstanding or distrust. I have confidence that you and the priests, religious and laity of your Dioceses will continue to bear witness to the image and likeness of God in each man, woman and child, regardless of their faith, by encouraging everyone to be open to dialogue in the service of peace and harmony. By doing everything possible to ensure that the rights of minorities in your country are respected, you further the cause of tolerance and mutual harmony in your country and beyond.

Consistory Hall, 29 October

To The Bishops Of Angola And São Tomé e Príncipe (C.E.A.S.T.) on their "Ad Limina" Visit*

The second "reef" in your work of evangelization is that the hearts of the baptized are still divided between Christianity and traditional African religions. Afflicted by problems in life, they do not hesitate to resort to practices that are incompatible with following Christ (cf. *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, n. 2117). An abominable effect of this is the marginalization and even the killing of children and the elderly who are falsely condemned of witchcraft. Remembering that human life is sacred in all its phases and situations, continue, dear Bishops, to raise your voices on behalf of all its victims. But, since it is a regional problem, a joint effort by the ecclesial communities plagued by this affliction is appropriate, in the hope of determining the deep-set reasons for such practices, to identify the pastoral and social risks conveyed by them and to arrive at the method which leads to their definitive eradication, with the cooperation of the Government and of civil society.

* For full text and translations, see: http://www.vatican.va/holy_father/benedict_xvi/speeches/2011/october/documents/hf_ben-xvi_spe_20111029_ad-limina-angola_en.html

Hall of Popes, 10 November 2011

*Address of His Holiness Benedict XVI to the Members of the Israeli Religious Council**

In our troubled times, dialogue between different religions is becoming ever more important in generating an atmosphere of mutual understanding and respect that can lead to friendship and solid trust in each other. This is a pressing need for the religious leaders of the Holy Land who, while living in a place full of memories sacred to our traditions, are tested daily by the difficulties of living together in harmony.

As I remarked in my recent meeting with religious leaders at Assisi, today we find ourselves confronted by two kinds of violence: on the one hand, the use of violence in the name of religion and, on the other, the violence that is the consequence of the denial of God which often characterises life in modern society. In this situation, as religious leaders we are called to reaffirm that the relationship of man to God, rightly lived, is a force for peace. This is a truth that must become ever more visible in the way in which we live with each other on a daily basis. Hence, I wish to encourage you to foster a climate of trust and dialogue among the leaders and members of all the religious traditions present in the Holy Land.

* For full text and translations, see: http://www.vatican.va/holy_father/benedict_xvi/speeches/2011/november/documents/hf_ben-xvi_spe_20111110_israeli-religious-council_en.html

APOSTOLIC JOURNEY TO BENIN
18-20 NOVEMBER 2011

Papal Flight, 18 November 2011

Interview of the Holy Father Benedict XVI with the journalists during the flight to Benin*

Father Lombardi: Holy Father, this journey takes us to Benin. But it is a very important journey for the whole of the African continent. What made you think Benin would be the right country for a message addressed to the whole of Africa, for today and for the future?

Holy Father: There are a number of reasons. The first is that Benin is a country at peace, both externally and internally. There are well-functioning democratic institutions, established in a spirit of freedom and responsibility, and so justice and work for the common good are possible and guaranteed by the functioning of the democratic institutions and the sense of responsibility in freedom. The second reason is that, as in most African countries, there are different religions present, and they coexist peacefully. There are Christians of different confessions – which is not always easy, there are Muslims, and finally there are the traditional religions, and all three of these different religions live side by side in mutual respect with a shared responsibility for peace, for interior and exterior reconciliation. It seems to me that this coexistence of religions, where interreligious dialogue fosters peace and freedom, is very important, and it is also an important element of the Post-Synodal Apostolic Exhortation. And finally, the third reason is that it is the country of my dear friend Cardinal Bernardin Gantin. I have always wanted, one day, to pray at his tomb. He was really a great friend – perhaps I will speak of him at the end, and so to visit the country of Cardinal Gantin, a great representative of Catholic Africa, and of African civilization at its most humane, is a further reason for me to go to Benin.

* For full text and translations, see: http://www.vatican.va/holy_father/benedict_xvi/speeches/2011/november/documents/hf_ben-xvi_spe_20111118_incontro-giornalisti_en.html

Presidential Palace of Cotonou, 19 November 2011

Meeting with Government Members, Representatives of State Institutions, Diplomatic Corps and major Religions*

(...) I would like to mention two current African realities. The first relates in a general way to the socio-political and economic life of the continent, the second to interreligious dialogue. These realities concern all of us, because our century seems to have been born in pain and struggles to grow in hope in these two particular areas.

...

I would now like to touch upon the second point, that of interreligious dialogue. I do not think it is necessary to recall the recent conflicts born in the name of God, or deaths brought about in the name of Him who is Life. Everyone of good sense understands that a serene and respectful dialogue about cultural and religious differences must be promoted. True interreligious dialogue rejects humanly self-centered truth, because the one and only truth is in God. God is Truth. Hence, no religion, and no culture may justify appeal or recourse to intolerance and violence. Aggression is an outmoded relational form which appeals to superficial and ignoble instincts. To use the revealed word, the Sacred Scriptures or the name of God to justify our interests, our easy and convenient policies or our violence, is a very grave fault.

I can only come to a knowledge of the other if I know myself. I cannot love unless I love myself (cf.*Mt* 22:39). Knowledge, deeper understanding and practice of one's religion, are therefore essential to true interreligious dialogue. This can only begin by sincere personal prayer on the part of the one who desires to dialogue. Let him go in secret to his private room (cf. *Mt* 6:6) to ask God for the purification of reason and to seek his blessing upon the desired encounter. This prayer also asks God for the gift to see in the other a brother to be loved and, within his tradition, a reflection of the truth which illumines all people (*Nostra Aetate*, 2). Everyone ought therefore to place himself in truth before God and before the other. This truth does not exclude and it is not confusion. Interreligious dialogue when badly understood leads to muddled thinking or to syncretism. This is not the dialogue which is sought.

* Excerpt. For full text and translations, see: http://www.vatican.va/holy_father/benedict_xvi/speeches/2011/november/documents/hf_ben-xvi_spe_20111119_corpo-diplom_en.html

Despite the steps already taken, we know that sometimes interreligious dialogue is not easy or that it is impeded for various reasons. This does not necessarily indicate failure. There are many forms of interreligious dialogue. Cooperation in social or cultural areas can help people to understand each other better and to live together serenely. It is also useful to know that dialogue does not take place through weakness; we enter into dialogue because we believe in God, the Creator and Father of all people. Dialogue is another way of loving God and our neighbour out of love for the truth (cf. *Mt*22:37).

Having hope does not mean being ingenuous but making an act of faith in God, the Lord of history, and the Lord of our future. Thus the Catholic Church puts into action one of the intuitions of the Second Vatican Council, that of promoting friendly relations between herself and the members of non-Christian religions. For decades now, the Pontifical Council dedicated to this task has been creating links, holding meetings and publishing documents regularly in order to foster such a dialogue. In this way the Church strives to overcome the confusion of languages and the dispersal of hearts born of the sin of Babel (cf. *Gen* 11). I greet all religious leaders who have kindly come here to meet me. I would like to assure them, as well as those from other African countries, that the dialogue offered by the Catholic Church comes from the heart. I encourage them to promote, above all among the young people, a pedagogy of dialogue, so that they may discover that our conscience is a sanctuary to be respected and that our spiritual dimension builds fraternity. True faith leads invariably to love. It is in this spirit that I invite all of you to hope.

These general ideas may be applied especially to Africa. In your continent, there are many families whose members profess different beliefs, and yet these families remain united. This is not just a unity wished by culture, but it is a unity cemented by a fraternal affection. Sometimes, of course, there are failures, but there are also many successes. In this area, Africa can offer all of us food for thought and thus become a source of hope.

To finish, I would like to use the image of a hand. There are five fingers on it and each one is quite different. Each one is also essential and their unity makes a hand. A good understanding between cultures, consideration for each other which is not condescending, and the respect of the rights of each one are a vital duty. This must be taught to all the faithful of the various religions. Hatred is a failure, indifference is an impasse, and dialogue is openness! Is this not good ground in which seeds of hope may be sown? To offer someone your hand means to hope, later, to love, and what could be more beautiful than a proffered hand? It was willed by God to offer and to receive. God did not want it to kill (cf. *Gen* 4:1ff) or to inflict suffering, but to care and to help live. Together with our heart and our intelligence, our hand too can become an instrument of dialogue.

It can make hope flourish, above all when our intelligence stammers and our heart stumbles.

"Card. Bernardin Gantin" International Airport, Cotonou, 20 November 2011

Departure Ceremony*

During my visit I was able to meet various components of Benin's society and many members of the Church. These numerous meetings, very different in nature, testify to the possibility of a harmonious coexistence within the nation, and between Church and State. Good will and mutual respect not only aid dialogue, but are essential for building unity between individuals, ethnic groups and peoples. The word "Fraternity" is the first of the three words found on your national emblem. Living in unity as brethren, while respecting legitimate differences, is not something utopian. Why should an African country not show the rest of the world the path to be taken towards living an authentic fraternity in justice, based on the greatness of the family and of labour? May Africans be able to experience reconciliation in peace and justice! These are the prayerful good wishes which I express to you, with confidence and hope, before I leave Benin and the African continent.

* For full text and translations, see: http://www.vatican.va/holy_father/benedict_xvi/speeches/2011/november/documents/hf_ben-xvi_spe_20111120_congedo-benin_en.html

Post-Synodal Apostolic Exhortation *Africae Munus* on the Church in Africa in service to Reconciliation, Justice and Peace*

7. The Exhortation *Ecclesia in Africa* ... invited Christian families in Africa to become "domestic churches"[1] so as to help their respective communities to recognize that they belong to one single Body. This image is important not only for the Church in Africa, but also for the universal Church at a time when the family is under threat from those who seek to banish God from our lives. To deprive the African continent of God would be to make it die a slow death, by taking away its very soul.

11. (...) Men and women are shaped by their past, but they live and journey in the present and they look ahead to the future. Like the rest of the world, Africa is experiencing a culture shock which strikes at the age-old foundations of social life, and sometimes makes it hard to come to terms with modernity. In this anthropological crisis which the African continent is facing, paths of hope will be discovered by fostering dialogue among the members of its constituent religious, social, political, economic, cultural and scientific communities. Africa will have to rediscover and promote a concept of the person and his or her relationship with reality that is the fruit of a profound spiritual renewal.

12. In the Exhortation *Ecclesia in Africa*, John Paul II observed that "despite the modern civilization of the 'global village', in Africa as elsewhere in the world the spirit of dialogue, peace and reconciliation is far from dwelling in the hearts of everyone. Wars, conflicts and racist and xenophobic attitudes still play too large a role in the world of human relations."[2] (...) Hence the Synod Fathers could see that the difficulties encountered by the countries and particular Churches in Africa are not so much insurmountable obstacles, but challenges, prompting us to draw upon the best of ourselves: our imagination, our intelligence, our vocation to follow without compromise in the footsteps of Jesus Christ, to seek God,

* For full text and translations, see: http://www.vatican.va/holy_father/benedict_xvi/apost_exhortations/documents/hf_ben-xvi_exh_20111119_africae-munus_en.html

[1] Cf. No. 92: *AAS* 88 (1996), 57-58; cf. Second Vatican Ecumenical Council, Dogmatic Constitution on the Church *Lumen Gentium*, 11; Decree on the Apostolate of the Laity *Apostolicam Actuositatem*, 11; John Paul II, Post-Synodal Apostolic Exhortation *Familiaris Consortio* (22 November 1981), 21: *AAS* 74 (1982), 104-106.

[2] No. 79: *AAS* 88 (1996), 51.

"Eternal Love and Absolute Truth".[3] Together with all sectors of African society, the Church therefore feels called to respond to these challenges. It is, in some sense, an imperative born of the Gospel.

35. Given the great ferment of peoples, cultures and religions which marks our age, Catholic universities and academic institutions play an essential role in the patient, rigorous and humble search for the light which comes from Truth. Only a truth capable of transcending human standards of measure, conditioned by their own limitations, brings peace to individuals and reconciliation to societies. For this reason, it would help to establish new Catholic universities wherever these do not yet exist (...) on the one hand, to shape the minds and hearts of the younger generation in the light of the Gospel and, on the other, to help African societies better to understand the challenges confronting them today by providing Africa ... with the light she needs.

37. Nonetheless, we must always remember that the Holy Spirit is the true agent of inculturation ... In this process of inculturation, it is important not to forget the equally essential task of evangelizing the world of contemporary African culture.

74. The defence of life also entails the elimination of ignorance through literacy programmes and quality education that embraces the whole person ... In Africa, the Church's teaching establishments – her schools, colleges, high schools, professional schools, universities and so forth – place tools for learning at people's disposal without discrimination on the basis of origin, financial means or religion.

IV. Dialogue and communion among believers

88. As many social movements indicate, peace in Africa, as elsewhere, is conditioned by interreligious relations. Hence it is important for the Church to promote dialogue as a spiritual disposition, so that believers may learn to work together, for example in associations for justice and peace, in a spirit of trust and mutual help. Families must be educated in attentive listening, fraternity and respect without fear of the other.[4] One thing only is necessary (cf. *Lk* 10:42) and capable of quenching every human person's thirst for eternity and all humanity's desire for unity: love and contemplation of him before whom Saint Augustine cried out: "Eternal Truth, true Love, beloved Eternity!"[5]

[3] Benedict XVI, Encyclical Letter *Caritas in Veritate* (29 June 2009), 1: *AAS* 101 (2009), 641.
[4] Cf. *Propositiones* 10, 11, 12, 13.
[5] *Confessions*, VII, 10, 16: *PL* 32, 742.

1. *Traditional African religions*

92. The Church lives daily alongside the followers of traditional African religions. With their reference to ancestors and to a form of mediation between man and Immanence, these religions are the cultural and spiritual soil from which most Christian converts spring and with which they continue to have daily contact. It is worth singling out knowledgeable individual converts, who could provide the Church with guidance in gaining a deeper and more accurate knowledge of the traditions, the culture and the traditional religions. This would make it easier to identify points of real divergence. It would also help to clarify the vital distinction between culture and cult and to discard those magical elements which cause division and ruin for families and societies. In this regard, the Second Vatican Council taught that the Church "urges her sons and daughters to enter with prudence and charity into discussion and collaboration with members of other religions. Let Christians, while witnessing to their own faith and way of life, acknowledge, preserve and encourage the spiritual and moral truths found among non-Christians, together with their life and culture."[6] It would help to manifest the treasures of the Church's sacramental life and spirituality in all their depth and to pass them on more effectively in catechesis, if the Church were to carry out a theological study of those elements of the traditional African cultures in conformity with Christ's teaching.

93. Witchcraft, which is based on the traditional religions, is currently experiencing a certain revival. Old fears are re-surfacing and creating paralyzing bonds of subjection. Anxiety over health, well-being, children, the climate, and protection from evil spirits at times lead people to have recourse to practices of traditional African religions that are incompatible with Christian teaching. The problem of "dual affiliation" – to Christianity and to the traditional African religions – remains a challenge. Through profound catechesis and inculturation, the Church in Africa needs to help people to discover the fullness of Gospel values. It is important to determine the profound meaning of these practices of witchcraft by identifying the many theological, social and pastoral implications of this scourge.

[6] Declaration on the Relation of the Church to Non-Christian Religions *Nostra Aetate*, 2; cf. *Propositiones* 3 and 13.

2. *Islam*

94. The Synod Fathers highlighted the complexity of the Muslim presence on the African continent. In some countries, good relations exist between Christians and Muslims; in others, the local Christians are merely second-class citizens, and Catholics from abroad, religious and lay, have difficulty obtaining visas and residence permits; in some, there is insufficient distinction between the religious and political spheres, while in others, finally, there is a climate of hostility. I call upon the Church, in every situation, to persist in esteem for Muslims, who "worship God who is one, living and subsistent; merciful and almighty, the creator of heaven and earth, who has also spoken to humanity."[7] If all of us who believe in God desire to promote reconciliation, justice and peace, we must work together to banish every form of discrimination, intolerance and religious fundamentalism. In her social apostolate, the Church does not make religious distinctions. She comes to the help of those in need, be they Christian, Muslim or animist. In this way she bears witness to the love of God, creator of all, and she invites the followers of other religions to demonstrate respect and to practise reciprocity in a spirit of esteem. I ask the whole Church, through patient dialogue with Muslims, to seek juridical and practical recognition of religious freedom, so that every citizen in Africa may enjoy not only the right to choose his religion freely[8] and to engage in worship, but also the right to freedom of conscience.[9] Religious freedom is the road to peace.[10]

Witnesses of the risen Christ

163. Today too, the Lord Jesus exhorts the Christians of Africa to proclaim in his name "repentance and forgiveness of sins to all nations" (*Lk* 24:47). For this reason, they are called to be witnesses of the Risen Lord (cf. *Lk* 24:48). The Synod Fathers insisted that evangelization "essentially consists in bearing witness to Christ in the power of the Spirit by one's life, then by one's words, in a spirit of openness and respectful dialogue with others, while holding fast to the values of the Gospel".[11] In the case of the Church in Africa, this witness needs to be at the service of reconciliation, justice and peace.

[7] Second Vatican Ecumenical Council, Declaration on the Relation of the Church to Non-Christian Religions *Nostra Aetate*, 3.

[8] Cf. *Final Message*, 41.

[9] Cf. *Propositio* 12.

[10] Cf. Benedict XVI, *Message for the 2011 World Day of Peace, AAS* 103 (2011), 46-58.

[11] *Propositio* 34, cf. Paul VI, Apostolic Exhortation *Evangelii Nuntiandi* (8 December 1975), 21: *AAS* 68 (1976), 19-20.

Consistory Hall, 2 December 2011

*To participants in the World Congress for the Pastoral Care of International Students**

Today more than ever the openness of cultures to one another is the most fertile terrain for dialogue among those committed to seeking authentic humanism. The meeting of cultures in universities must, then, be encouraged and supported having human and Christian principles, the universal values, as its foundation so as to bring up a new generation capable of dialogue and discernment, committed to spreading respect and cooperation for peace and development.

* For full text and translations, see: http://www.vatican.va/holy_father/benedict_xvi/speeches/2011/december/documents/hf_ben-xvi_spe_20111202_pastorale-studenti_en.html

ADDRESSES BY
CARDINAL JEAN-LOUIS TAURAN
PRESIDENT OF THE PONTIFICAL COUNCIL
FOR INTERRELIGIOUS DIALOGUE

IL PLURALISMO RELIGIOSO FA PARTE DEL DISEGNO MISTERIOSO DI DIO*

Non vi poteva essere migliore occasione liturgica di quella odierna per ispirare i partecipanti alla Riunione dei Vescovi e Delegati delle Conferenze episcopali europee per il dialogo con l'islam, che questa memoria di San Giustino Martire.

Giustino, filosofo di professione, in effetti, ebbe la preoccupazione di diffondere la dottrina cristiana in termini adatti alla cultura del proprio tempo. Per lui, dopo una lunga ricerca filosofica, apparve evidente che c'è un progetto divino della creazione e della salvezza che si compie in Gesù Cristo, Logos, Verbo eterno, Ragione creatrice. Ogni uomo, in quanta creatura razionale, porta in se un "seme" e può cogliere i barlumi della verità.

Sì, Gesù ci ha confermato che Dio ha un progetto sugli uomini fin dalle origini: Egli *"vuole che tutti gli uomini siano salvi e giungano alla conoscenza della verità"* (1 *Tim* 2,4). E negli Atti degli Apostoli, leggiamo che Pietro, indirizzandosi ai pagani, non teme di esprimere la sua convinzione, la più intima: *mi rendo conto, in verità, che Dio non è parziale, ma che, in ogni nazione, chiunque lo teme e pratica la giustizia, e accolto da Lui"* (*Atti* 10, 34-35).

Così, il pluralismo religioso può essere considerato come un disegno misterioso di Dio, il cui significato ultimo sfugge alla nostra intelligenza. Così, può essere interpretato un bellissimo testo del Concilio Vaticano II: "associato al mistero pasquale, diventando conforme a Cristo nella morte, cosi anche il cristiano andrà incontro alla risurrezione fortificato dalla speranza. E ciò vale anche per tutti gli uomini di buona volontà, nel cui cuore lavora invisibilmente la grazia. Cristo, infatti, e morto per tutti e la vocazione ultima dell'uomo e una sola, quella divina; perciò dobbiamo ritenere che lo Spirito Santo dia a tutti la possibilità di venire

* Omelia per l'Assemblea delle Conferenze Episcopali Europee (CEE), 1° giugno 2011, Cattedrale di Torino, Memoria Liturgica di San Giustino, Martire. For further information, see Press Release, p. 258-260.

associati, nel modo che Dio conosce, al mistero pasquale" (*GS*, 22). Quindi non c'è da meravigliarsi se troviamo nelle altre religioni, malgrado le loro imperfezioni, dei *semi di verità*, di bontà, di santità, che sono il risultato dell'azione dello Spirito Santo (i famosi *semina verbi* di San Giustino).

Che vuol dire tutto questo? Vuol dire che la storia degli uomini non è mai stata abbandonata a se stessa; l'uomo ha sempre cercato a tentoni il Dio sconosciuto e il Dio di Gesù Cristo è sempre stato alla ricerca dell'uomo.

Se Dio è unico, e unico è anche il Mediatore tra Dio e gli uomini, tuttavia tutto ciò che di buono si ritrova nelle altre religioni, la Chiesa lo riconosce come preparazione evangelica (*LG*, 16).

Pur rispettando tutti, dobbiamo esporre la nostra fede senza timore, integralmente, come San Paolo fece nell'Areopago; si tratta di proclamare il punto essenziale che è la risurrezione di Gesù Cristo. É lì che San Paolo riscontra l'opposizione dei suoi ascoltatori.

In realtà esiste un unico problema: sapere se non c'è un caso unico, dove un uomo ha avuto il diritto di dire che era Dio; non perche quest'uomo si faceva Dio ma perche Dio sì è fatto uomo. E, in realtà, affermava Benedetto XVI a Parigi, *"Dio si è mostrato personalmente ... La novità dell'annuncio cristiano non risiede in un pensiero, ma in un fatto: Dio si è rivelato"* (Collège des Bernardins).

Con tutti i credenti, dobbiamo certo aiutare i nostri contemporanei a guardare verso il cielo ed essere solidali con tutte le loro legittime aspirazioni.

Ma come testimoni della vittoria di Cristo sul male e sulla morte, noi cristiani possiamo dare una dimensione di ottimismo nel quadro cupo di oggi, perche vediamo, malgrado tante contraddizioni, l'azione del Risorto nelle aspirazioni di tanti uomini e donne per la giustizia, per la pace, per la qualità della vita.

Come non vedere l'azione del Risorto in tanti che cercano Dio e il senso della loro vita personale e collettiva? Sono gli uomini e le donne che aspettano nel *Cortile dei Gentili.*

Come non vedere l'azione del Risuscitato in tanti coraggiosi missionari, sacerdoti, religiose che offrono una luminosa testimonianza? E poi, non possiamo ignorare tanti uomini e donne, che si sforzano di essere cristiani contagiosi nella vita quotidiana "con i suoi lavori noiosi e facili, ma che richiedono tanto amore" (François de Sales).

* * *

Gesù ci rende attenti agli altri, alle loro culture e religioni, per ascoltare, per capire, ma anche per scoprire il suo Spirito all'opera in ogni uomo. Ovviamente, lasciamolo agire innanzitutto in noi, nella Chiesa, affinché, di là delle nostre colpe e delle crisi, questa Chiesa rimanga sempre il segno della sua presenza tra gli uomini e in mezzo a noi.

Qual è lo scopo della nuova evangelizzazione? Qual è lo scopo della futura riunione di Assisi? Qual è lo scopo del dialogo con le altre Religioni, se non rivelare il volto di Gesù Cristo risorto, che viene per salvare, per rallegrare, e per salvare le Nazioni? Qualunque sia la situazione storica in cui si realizza, la salvezza ha un solo nome: Cristo risorto! AccogliamoLo in questa Eucaristia, con un cuore pieno di gratitudine.

Lasciamoci guidare, quindi, dallo Spirito Santo che ci conduce verso la verità tutta intera, e ci da la forza di essere testimoni di questa Gesù che ci ha rivelato il vero vi so di Dio, *"che da a tutti la vita ed il respiro ad ogni cosa"* (Prima lettura odierna).

Grazie sia reso a Lui che "ci ha ammessi alla sua presenza a compiere il servizio sacerdotale".

La vita luminosa di Shahbaz Bhatti*

Cardinal Jean-Louis TAURAN
President of the Pontifical Council
for Interreligious Dialogue

La Liturgia della Parola ci ha ricordato che essere cristiani e sempre fare una scelta: tra la luce e le tenebre, tra la fede e la legge, tra la vita e la morte, tra il Dio rivelato da Gesù e la sapienza umana, tra servire e dominare.

Non si tratta pero solo di ascoltare la Parola di Dio, di ricevere i sacramenti o di acquisire una buona conoscenza. Ma Gesù domanda pure altra cosa. Desidera che il "dire" sia accompagnato dal "fare".

"*Non chiunque mi dice Signore, Signore, entrerà nel regno dei cieli, ma colui che fa la volontà del Padre mio*".

Se ci accontentassimo di essere cristiani solo sociologicamente, o peggio, cristiani la cui vita fosse in contraddizione con ciò che diciamo di Gesù, allora correremmo il rischio di sentirci dire un giorno: "Via da me, non vi conosco".

Oggi abbiamo davanti a noi la vita luminosa di Shahbaz Bhatti. Aveva scelto Cristo, come salvatore, la Chiesa come madre, ogni essere umano come fratello. Fu coerente fino alla fine. La sua vita fu e rimarrà per sempre una vita immolata, un sacrificio offerto a Dio. Come desiderava, lo troviamo ai piedi della croce di Gesù: "Non voglio posizioni di potere, voglio solo un posto ai piedi di Gesù, voglio che la mia vita, il mio carattere, le mie azioni parlino per me e dicano che sto seguendo Gesù Cristo!". Queste parole sono cosi forti che converrebbe tacere. Ma lasciamoci prendere per mano dal nostro amico Shahbaz Bhatti. Seguiamolo fino alla croce di Gesù. Da li, dice ai suoi aguzzini: "Fino al mio ultimo respiro continuerò a servire Gesù in questa povera umanità sofferente: i cristiani, i bisognosi, i poveri". Poi, con lui, alziamo lo sguardo verso il Crocifisso.

E' la che comprendiamo la profondità della perdizione dell'uomo, il mistero di iniquità, di cui parlava Paolo, il potere del male. Ma in Gesù crocifisso, scopriamo anche un po' dell'immensità dell'amore divino che redime. La croce ci rivela il volto misericordioso di Cristo, che ci apre sempre il cammino della speranza. Sant'Agostino ha immaginato un dialogo tra Gesù e il Buon Ladrone. Sant'Agostino gli chiede: Come hai fatto per capire il dramma del Calvario? Hai

* Omelia per la Santa Messa in suffragio del Ministro Shahbaz Bhatti, Roma, Pontificio Collegio San Pietro Apostolo, IX Domenica per Annum - Ciclo "A", 6 marzo 2011.

studiato le Scritture tra i tuoi latrocini? Come hai fatto a capire le profezie e confessare la tua fede in Cristo in modo così luminoso, proprio quando i suoi discepoli lo stavano abbandonando? E poi Agostino presta al Buon Ladrone questa risposta:

No, non ho studiato le Scritture, non ho meditato le profezie, ma Gesù mi ha guardato e nel suo sguardo ho capito tutto!

Poiché, da bambino e da uomo, Shahbaz ha fatto sì che Gesù incrociasse il suo sguardo e aprisse il suo cuore, egli non ha più avuto alcuna paura, anzi ha avuto il coraggio di servire i suoi fratelli cristiani e non cristiani, il proprio Paese, di offrire i suoi servizi alla Chiesa, a rischio della propria vita.

Dobbiamo rendere grazie a Dio per aver messo sulla nostra strada quest'autentico "martire", cioè "testimone" della fede cristiana, che ha saputo "dire" e "fare" e che ci ricorda che nella croce si trova l'autentica speranza:

- la Croce ci spinge a dare la nostra vita per i fratelli;
- la Croce ci ricorda che l'amore e più forte dell'odio;
- la Croce ci fa comprendere meglio che c'e più gioia nel dare che nel ricevere;
- la Croce significa che Dio e sempre più grande di noi uomini, e soprattutto che la vita e più forte della morte.

Se Gesù ha detto" Nessuno mi toglie la mia vita, ma sono io che la offro" (Gv 10, 18), Shahbaz Bhatti ha potuto dire: "Non ho più parole da dire, dedico la mia vita a Gesù!".

Non esiste un cristianesimo senza la croce. Il messaggio evangelico disturberà sempre. Ma l'amore dei cristiani per tutti sarà sempre luce, consolazione e solidarietà in mezzo alla violenza. Non mancheranno mai cristiani capaci di portare la luce del vangelo nell"umano senza distruggerlo, ma purificandolo, come ricordava il Santo Padre giorni fa, evocando S François de Sales, il quale scrisse: "l'uomo e la perfezione dell"universo; lo spirito e la perfezione dell"uomo; l'amore e quella dello spirito, e la carità quella dell'amore". Il nostro Amico ha saputo condividere con molti in Pakistan quest'amore cristiano che non esclude nessuno. Se avrà esercitato un potere, sarà stato "il potere del cuore".

Mi vengono alla mente immagini commoventi delle due Eucaristie che ho celebrato in Islamabad e in Lahore, nel mese di novembre scorso. La domenica 28 novembre, il ministro Bhatti venne a salutarmi all'aeroporto di Lahore e mi disse: "So che mi uccideranno. Offro la mia vita per Cristo e per il dialogo interreligioso".

A tutti nostri fratelli e sorelle cattolici del Pakistan giunga il nostro messaggio di comunione nella fede, la speranza e la carità. Spesso si sentono soli, senza protezione. Aspettano molto dalla comunità internazionale. Stamane il Santo Padre gli ha raccomandati alla preghiera di tutta la Chiesa. A tale proposito, come

non ricordare che il 1° gennaio, il Papa invitava "i leader delle grandi religioni del mondo e i responsabili delle nazioni a rinnovare il loro impegno per la promozione e la tutela della liberta religiosa, in particolare per la difesa delle minoranze religiose, le quali non costituiscono una minaccia contro l'identità della maggioranza, ma sono al contrario un'opportunità per il dialogo e per il reciproco arricchimento culturale. La loro difesa rappresenta la maniera ideale per consolidare lo spirito di benevolenza, di apertura e di reciprocità con cui tutelare i diritti e le libertà fondamentali in tutte le aree e le regioni del mondo".

Possa Dio farci capire meglio cosa vuol dire "dare la propria vita per i fratelli". In fondo, il peccato, il mistero del male che sembra dominare la scena del mondo, ha forse molto semplicemente la funzione di dare a Dio la gioia di perdonare, e ci sprona ad essere, sulle strade della vita dove Gesù ci precede, araldi della sua presenza, convinti che da Lui "riceviamo adesso la riconciliazione" (cfr *Rm* 5,28), per essere a nostra volta riconciliatori degli uomini con Dio per mezzo della Croce.

Christians in the Holy Land*

Cardinal Jean-Louis Tauran
President of the Pontifical Council
for Interreligious Dialogue

By sending me to you, Pope Benedict XVI manifests his deep interest in this conference and, having had the privilege of being a member of the Papal Suite during his pilgrimage to the Holy Land in May 2009, I can remember the impact of his farewell speech at Tel Aviv airport when he pleaded for a lasting peace which can only rest on justice, genuine reconciliation and healing. But he did not hesitate also to state that one of the saddest sights of his pilgrimage was the Wall.

During these two days of exchange, I think that everybody here is convinced that if a wall can protect, it also divides and makes suspicion and ignorance grow.

So it is important that Christians in particular who are the disciples of the One who broke down "the barrier of hostility" to quote Saint Paul (*Eph* 2.14), should be in a condition to freely contribute to harmony and dialogue in the Israeli and Palestinian societies.

But unfortunately we have to recognize that the situation of Christians in the Holy Land, like in other Middle East countries, is marked by precariousness. We must remember that the political evolution of the last 50 years have made the presence and the leadership of Christians fragile: revolutions and wars have contributed to weaken the Christian communities and favoured the emigration of many families.

What we have to avoid is that the Holy Land becomes an archaeological and historical site to be visited like the Coliseum in Rome. For us Christians the Holy Land is the land of God's revelation, the place where Jesus lived, died and was resurrected. We cannot even think that Bethlehem or the Holy Sepulcher should become museums with entrance tickets and guides who explain beautiful legends. For us the Holy Places, the shrines, are much more than stones. The Holy Places are living testimonies which have around them a population, families with their schools, their cultural patrimony, their languages, their folklore, their artisans, handicrafts as well as hospitals, etc.

We have been repeating for years that we are a Christian minority in the Holy Land and in the Arab world. I think it is enough to repeat such evidence.

* Intervention as Representative of His Holiness Pope Benedict XVI at the *International Conference on Christians in the Holy Land*, Lambeth Palace, London, 19 July 2011.

We are a minority, but we are a minority which matters. I think of our schools, universities and hospitals which welcome everybody, regardless of his or her religion.

Today the time has come to reflect on the place and the mission of Christian communities in the Holy Land and in the Middle East.

First of all, our Christian brothers and sisters of that part of the world have to realize that they have a certain peculiarity, I should say a certain dignity: they all belong to apostolic churches. Missionaries from Rome or Constantinople did not bring the Christian faith there. Those communities have been built on the faith of the apostles. They are apostolic communities in the deepest sense of the word. Their practice comes through the faith of the apostles; this is their identity.

Their liturgical patrimony is of an exceptional value. (Let us mention by the way that in many Oriental Churches the Eucharistic Prayer is said in the language spoken by Jesus.) It is important not to make of this rich heritage something we keep in a safe. There is a tendency to transform our Christian communities into *cultural* communities.

Secondly, Christians in the Holy Land and in the Middle East, are Arabs. They have been in that part of the world much before the Muslims. They are not asking asylum, they are rather at home. Our Christian brothers and sisters speak Arabic and, for example, many Christians have contributed to the rebirth of Arabic literature at the end of the 19th century. I remember that when I was serving in the Nunciature in Beirut at the time of the civil war (1979—1983), despite the bombing of the Christian part of Beirut the Pauline fathers continued to print the Koran in the Arabic language.

Arab Christians are a gift to the societies because they bring cultural openness, a sense of the dignity of the human person and particularly of women; a conception of freedom which harmonizes rights and privileges and a conception of political society which can lead to democracy.

Christians have the vocation to be a bridge. Then the question is not how the Christians are going to survive in the Holy Land and the Middle East, but how they are ready to be witnesses to their faith. I think that many Muslims are worried about the future of Christians in that region, because they know that Christians can help them to understand modernity and how to reconcile diversity and unity.

The Christians have been in the Holy Land without interruption for centuries. They have enjoyed national and international rights. We cannot neglect the importance of a solution of the juridical status of the most significant part of Jerusalem, that is to say where the main Holy Places of the three monotheistic religions are (practically the city *intra muros*). You know that the Holy See is in favor

of a special status, internationally guaranteed, in order to preserve the uniqueness and sacredness of that part of the city.

For Christians, Jerusalem has a special significance. First of all, it contains the most precious places where Jesus lived. Secondly, it is the city with an ongoing presence of a Christian community. So for the local Christians, like for the Jews and the Muslims, Jerusalem is not only a holy city, it is also their *home* city where they have a right to continue to live and to work. They must be granted and have secured the most fundamental rights: freedom of conscience and freedom of religion, freedom of movement, civic and historical rights, education, hospitals, the possession of their own institutions (seminaries, universities, monasteries, etc.). Of course, all this has to be recognized not only for Christians, but for all the inhabitants of the Holy Land.

The three monotheistic religions recognize Abraham as their father. In spite of the fact that his heritage gives room to different interpretations, we can find a common message: to follow Abraham means not to look back, but towards the future. Jews, Christians and Muslims must be heralds of hope. To follow Abraham means also to be attentive to the foreigner (remember the episode at the Tree of Mamre). To follow Abraham means never choosing to take the path that is a dead-end, but to be always a pilgrim.

Christians in the Holy Land do not pretend to be by themselves, to rule or to impose, but just to blossom where they have been planted by God, and to make their fellow citizens understand that every religion is an invitation to go along without idols, to be welcoming to newness, and to be always capable of solidarity.

Since Cain and Abel, exclusivism and the desire for security has always been in the heart of man. But history like religions teach us hat there is only one future: a shared future. What is important is not to stop but rather to continue our dialogue, our pilgrimage towards the truth, with the conviction that "it is not because things are difficult that we do not dare; it is because we do not dare that they are difficult". You will have recognized a quotation from the Roman philosopher Seneca. So let us follow his advice: Let us dare.

Verso Assisi: l'uomo non vive solamente di pane*

Cardinal Jean-Louis Tauran
President of the Pontifical Council
for Interreligious Dialogue

Benedetto XVI, annunciando la Giornata di riflessione, dialogo e preghiera per la pace e la giustizia nel mondo, che si terrà ad Assisi il 27 ottobre sul tema "Pellegrini della verità, pellegrini della pace", ha detto di voler «fare memoria di quel gesto storico voluto dal mio predecessore e di rinnovare solennemente l'impegno dei credenti di ogni religione a vivere la propria fede religiosa come servizio per la causa della pace». Non si tratta, quindi, di ripetere ciò che si è fatto nel 1986, ma di celebrare un avvenimento e ricordare una grande verità che il Papa ha coniato con una formula ispirata: «Chi è in cammino verso Dio, non può non trasmettere la pace. Chi costruisce la pace, non può non avvicinarsi a Dio».

Quest'incontro ha una dimensione particolare: non sono stati invitati solo rappresentanti delle religioni, ma anche persone in ricerca di Dio, quelle persone che sono nel "cortile dei gentili", come ama dire il Papa. Si tratta di offrire un'occasione ai cosiddetti "non credenti" per interpellare i credenti, e in particolare esigere da loro una testimonianza di vita che sia coerente con la religione che professano, e ai credenti l'occasione di condividere con i non credenti il tesoro che è la loro fede e, ciò facendo, di dimostrare al mondo che Dio non è un pericolo per la società, come dice Benedetto XVI.

Ogni uomo è alla ricerca della verità, e una delle finalità di questo "cortile dei gentili" è costruire una "fraternità malgrado le differenze". Perciò il primo atteggiamento consiste nel rispettare, aiutare e amare ogni essere umano perché è creatura di Dio. Quindi anche chi cerca Dio, anche colui per il quale Dio è il Dio ignoto, è oggetto dell'amore di Dio, e quindi del nostro amore.

Mi sembra che il cosiddetto "spirito di Assisi" si possa sintetizzare in cinque atteggiamenti: essere disponibili a uscire dalle nostre case, dai nostri templi, per ascoltare chi vive e crede anche in maniera diversa da me. In secondo luogo, considerare gli agnostici come "cercatori di Dio" e aiutarli nella loro ricerca dell'Assoluto. Vorrei citarne uno, il grande biologo francese Jean Rostand, che ai suoi amici cattolici diceva: «Come siete fortunati a credere!». Passava notti e giorni ad interrogarsi sull'origine dell'universo e della coscienza. Affermava: «Non

* Testo pubblicato su *Tracce*, ottobre 2011.

posso ammettere che un essere abbia creato tutto questo. D'altra parte, faccio fatica ad ammettere che tutto questo sia nato per caso». Dando poi questa definizione di un agnostico: «Allora, io sono dilaniato».

Terzo punto: non bisogna essere timidi nel rendere conto della propria fede. Sempre, però, come raccomandava san Pietro, «con dolcezza e rispetto». Come quarto atteggiamento, desiderare d'incontrare l'altro nella sua alterità senza pretendere che ci segua, ma senza neppure mettere la nostra fede tra parentesi: non si dialoga sull'ambiguità. Infine, rifiutare l'individualismo e l'indifferenza religiosa, ma piuttosto vedere nel pluralismo religioso un'emulazione spirituale.

Tutto questo per contribuire al bene comune della società, di cui i credenti sono membri. In cosa consiste? La Costituzione pastorale *Gaudium et Spes* lo definisce così: «L'insieme di quelle condizioni della vita sociale che permettono, tanto ai gruppi, quanto ai singoli membri, di raggiungere la perfezione più pienamente e più speditamente» (n. 26).

La manifestazione di Assisi sarà anche un'occasione per ricordare l'esigenza della libertà di religione, che non è un diritto tra gli altri ma il diritto fondamentale. Perché la dignità fondamentale di ogni persona trova la sua fonte nella relazione con Dio Padre, a immagine e somiglianza del quale essa è stata creata ed è stata dotata di intelligenza e libertà. La libertà di religione supera di gran lunga la libertà di culto. È la possibilità di partecipare al dialogo pubblico in qualità di credenti. La libertà di religione, quindi, è una forza per la pace. Credenti che si mettono in pellegrinaggio insieme, che meditano in silenzio sulla propria comune origine e sul proprio comune destino, sui propri limiti e sulle proprie responsabilità, sono una risorsa per l'intera comunità umana.

Certamente il Papa avrà occasione di ripetere ciò che diceva Giovanni Paolo II: «Se vogliamo che il mondo diventi finalmente una casa di pace, la preghiera è la forza necessaria per implorarla e ottenerla». Non solamente il sentimento religioso fa crescere in noi l'interiorità, ma ci dà anche il vero significato della nostra presenza nel mondo. Si può dire, anzi, che la dimensione religiosa spinge i credenti a offrire con più ardore il loro contributo alla costruzione di una società armoniosa dove regna la pace. Alla preghiera, ovviamente, si deve aggiungere la necessità del dialogo ecumenico e del dialogo interreligioso.

Grazie al confronto e allo scambio, i credenti hanno potuto maturare una coscienza più chiara delle proprie responsabilità nella società odierna. Penso che la riunione di Assisi darà pubblicità ai tanti sforzi compiuti dal 1986 fino ad oggi: una mutua conoscenza, un dialogo sempre più allargato, che ha anche generato in chi lo pratica atteggiamenti interiori quali la serenità, l'equilibrio, il superamento degli istinti, gesti di comprensione e di perdono...

Questo evento ricorderà al mondo che l'uomo non vive solamente di pane. E sarebbe opportuno che i capi politici riconoscano il grande potenziale della reli-

gione per la costruzione della pace. In questo inizio del terzo millennio non si tratta di dettare agli uomini quanto hanno da fare, ma di richiamare loro che sono amministratori delle risorse materiali e morali di questo mondo. È anche loro dovere il contribuire all'organizzazione di una società in cui uomini e donne non siano mai privati delle fonti di luce e delle proposte di senso capaci d'illuminarli e sostenerli: di fronte alle sperimentazioni sull'uomo, all'aborto, all'eutanasia, alla banalizzazione della sessualità, alla dittatura dell'apparenza, i cristiani devono collaborare a tutto ciò che va nel senso dell'umano e dell'umanizzazione.

Penso che da Assisi dovrebbe anche partire un messaggio destinato ai legislatori e agli insegnanti: sia sempre rispettata la persona, che cerca la verità di fronte all'enigma della sua condizione. Perché i giovani possano essere educati al senso critico che permette di scegliere tra vero e falso, di apprezzare le grandi tradizioni culturali aperte alla trascendenza che esprimono così bene la nostra aspirazione alla verità e alla libertà.

As Believers in God We can Join Efforts in Common Concerns

Address at the Christian-Muslim Informal Meeting*

Cardinal Jean-Louis Tauran
President of the Pontifical Council
for Interreligious Dialogue

(...) As believers in God we have an enormous task before us to give our contribution in the form of moral guidance to our contemporary world which is facing increasing conflict, economic meltdown, poverty and injustice and ethical, social and cultural crises. We need to jointly search for a satisfactory solution to these grave socio-cultural and political problems besetting us. I propose to you *a few areas of main concern we can concentrate on for our joint collaboration as believers in God.* This we will pursue with respect for all people with love and in a spirit of solidarity.

Today, life is increasingly becoming *insecure in the globalized world* of ours. Since globalization takes the whole world as a single market, labour is losing its voice; national governments are facing difficulties increasingly and there is corporate insecurity and volatility of financial capital. Inequality is rising. Unskilled labour has little prospects of employment. Globalization excludes a whole lot of people giving rise to further impoverishment. Due to privatization, there is loss of guaranteed employment. Many people fail to see how they can have a secure and worthwhile future. Therefore despair stimulates them to withdraw into their community shells often attracted by the fundamentalist movements and trends, resulting in religious fundamentalism and sectarian violence. All this has given rise to ethnic strife, religious conflicts, social unrest and wanton violence. In this context, as religious leaders we need to work together to build our global world with new possibilities for justice, security and peace. This will not be an easy task. We need to pool all our moral and religious resources to contribute towards confidence-building in the insecure world.

This insecurity of the present world is compounded by the *model of development* we are pursuing. A large number of people in the world are in the clutches

* Mumbai, India, 6 November 2011. For further details see "Reports", p. 348-354.

of hunger, deprivation, endemic diseases and illiteracy. In this context it is opportune to remember what Pope Benedict XVI has said, "The primary capital to be safeguarded and valued is man" (Encyclical, *Caritas in Veritate* No. 25). There is a great danger of entrusting the entire process of development to technology alone. We will work towards promoting integral human development with human dimensions for freedom and justice. This has been aptly articulated by His Holiness recently in his address to the Muslim leaders in Berlin. I quote: "It is inconceivable...that a society could survive long term without consensus on fundamental ethical values.... As believers, setting out from our respective convictions, we can offer an important witness in many key areas of life in society. I am thinking, for example, of the protection of the family based on marriage, respect for life in every phase of its natural course or the promotion of greater social justice"(Pope Benedict XVI, *23 September, 2011*).

Another area where we can collaborate with each other is the concern of increasing *intercultural life and related conflicts*. Today, the world is becoming a highly interconnected world through economic, social, political and cultural contacts. As a result, people from different national boundaries shift their place of work and residence exposing themselves to different cultural worlds. There is a need to understand the needs of migrants. As partners of God's mission in the world, we can work together as bridge builders among the people. As bridges offer the means for two-way traffic, our intercultural work and life must be characterized by mutual and respectful exchange towards our search for truth. We need to jointly search for the path of truth which are beyond our subjective, sentimental emotions and opinions. This we need to pursue with respect and love.

Yet another area of concern for all of us is *justice*. In the context of multiple divide among peoples, we need to strengthen dialogue for human solidarity to work together, to promote justice. Our common ground from where we can work is our belief that man is created by God and therefore we belong to the same human family.

Lastly, we understand that our concern for human development needs to be closely related to the duties arising from *our relationship to the natural environment*. The environment is God's gift to everyone, and in our use of it we have a responsibility towards the poor, towards future generations and towards humanity as a whole. Hence, as religious leaders we will work together closely in conscientizing our people to use the gift of God with responsibility.

(...)

Enhancing Hindu-Christian relations and collaboration for justice, peace and harmony

Address at the Hindu-Christian Meeting*

Cardinal Jean-Louis Tauran
President of the Pontifical Council
for Interreligious Dialogue

(...). It gives me immense joy to be in your midst for this meeting along with H.Ex. Most Reverend Pier Luigi Celata, and Reverend Father Santiago of the Pontifical Council for Interreligious Dialogue. You have accorded us a warm welcome and I must say we are truly overwhelmed by this great gesture of yours and I thank all of you at the very outset of this colloquium. H. Ex. Thomas Dabre, Bishop of Poona and Member of our Dicastery on our request took upon himself the onerous task of organizing this event. I express our sincere thanks to His Excellency and to all his generous collaborators.

It was in June 2009 that H. Em. Oswald Card. Gracias had organized a two-day meeting in Mumbai between Hindu and Catholic religious leaders wherein I had the privilege to be present. Drawing inspiration from that meeting, our Pontifical Council deemed it opportune to facilitate a coming together of religious leaders and scholars of both religious traditions for a mutual sharing of ideas and reflections so as to strengthen the relationships and broaden the collaboration between the two communities in promoting justice, peace and harmony in society. This colloquium, I am hopeful, will give us a focused direction and a plan of action in this regard.

In the decades that followed the Second Vatican Council, the Catholic Church, with a focussed new thrust, gave relatively higher attention and visibility to fulfilling the duty of dialogue. The Pontifical Council for Interreligious Dialogue, formerly known as Secretariat for Non-Christians, entrusted with this responsibility since then, has been engaged in this task with the active collaboration of the local Churches, people of all religions and all people of good will, all of whom we consider as valued and important agents of interreligious relations.

* Jnana Deepa Vidyapeeth, Pune, India, 6 November 2011. For further details see "Reports", p. 348-354.

Religions, as most of us are firmly convinced of, are called to be channels of peace and unity and not of conflict and division. But unfortunately, there has been a vicious tendency, more perhaps over the recent years, among some with vested interests, to create distrust, discord, dissensions and disharmony between communities in the name of religions prompting the cynics thereby to blame religions as the root cause of division and lack of peace in the world. The alarming rise of religious fundamentalism, the increasing instances of politicisation of religions and the spread of secularism only seem to support the accusations of the cynics directed against religions. Despite the fact that some individuals and groups use religions for spreading hate, violence and division in society, as believers grounded in our own respective faiths and committed to a peaceful co-existence of people of all religions, it is incumbent upon all of us to uphold by word and deed the true nature of religions as source of unity and peace and to work together for the promotion of the same in the world. This will nurture a culture of religious solidarity that will defeat the divisive forces and shape the society on the ideals of love, justice, peace and co-existence, the values that all religions, fundamentally aim to propagate and perpetuate. Pope Benedict XVI proclaimed it in the most unambiguous terms: "our efforts to come together and foster dialogue are a valuable contribution to building peace on solid foundations"(*Address to the delegates of other Churches and Ecclesial Communities and other Religious traditions at the inauguration of His Pontificate, 25 April, 2005*)

Having thus placed the context of our colloquium in perspective, I see it as opportune to call your attention also to our common challenge and responsibility in society. As believers and men and women of good will we have a huge moral responsibility of working together for the cause of humanity, and of avoiding and averting all things, both individually and collectively, that are detrimental to the realization of the common human aspiration for co-existence, harmony and peace based on respect for the human dignity of each person. It is also a challenge both in the intra-religious and inter-religious situations. Our religious beliefs which teach us the transcendent dignity of human person should never be subjected to relativism but rather allowed to ignite our minds and hearts to spread a strong sense of the value of human life, freed from all kinds of discrimination on the basis of race, colour, life condition and, most especially, religion. This is the natural way to a just social order and peace.

In this process, inter-religious cooperation becomes a means, equal to none other. Unless and until people are able to meet the basic necessities of their daily lives, and their fundamental human rights, including that of religious freedom, are protected, it will be difficult to guarantee lasting peace in the society. While under-

lining the need of interreligious cooperation to address these issues, Blessed John Paul II of happy memory, during his historic visit to this country in 1986 called upon all religious leaders and intellectuals to join hands "to eliminate hunger, poverty, ignorance, persecution, discrimination and every form of enslavement of the human spirit"(*Address to the representatives of different religious and cultural traditions, Indira Gandhi Stadium, New Delhi, 3 April, 1986*).

In concluding, I desire to affirm that in spite of their differences, both Hinduism and Christianity do have a treasury of shared values and a profoundly pro-human vision for the good of the society. I believe that the real test of a genuine relationship, in fact, lies in the respectful acceptance also of the differences no matter what they are and how many there are. All what matters as believers with profound wealth of our own respective spiritual traditions is our positive and continuing commitment to the welfare of our immediate society and the larger human family everywhere. I am sincerely hopeful that the coming three days will prove to be days of meeting of minds and of hearts to overcome misgivings, suspicions, prejudices, indifferences, and ignorance of the other, and, above all else, to grow in mutual understanding, appreciation and respect taking thus the task of working for justice, peace and harmony in society forward 'together,' in other words 'with the different other.'

This colloquium is a sign of hope for all of us which we begin with openness and humility to recognize and appreciate what is 'true, good and holy' in each other's religion in view of shaping a culture of trust and collaboration.

Call to Enduring Peace

Address at the Interreligious Meeting in Vigyan Bhavan*

Cardinal Jean-Louis Tauran
President of the Pontifical Council
for Interreligious Dialogue

(...). It gives me immense joy to be present here in your midst today and participate in this unique event of inter-religious meet along with His Grace Archbishop Pier Luigi Celata and Father Santiago Michael of our Pontifical Council for Interreligious Dialogue. This has been organized to observe the 25th anniversary of the historic inter-religious meet convened by the late Blessed Pope John Paul II in Assisi in 1986. You may be aware of the fact that a commemorative event was held in Assisi on 27th of October this year wherein 18 persons belonging to India-related religious traditions also participated. The 1986 meeting was historic in more senses than one. It was the first time that the Head of the Catholic Church gathered the leaders of all faiths from around the world to begin a new journey for peace: fasting, prayer and pilgrimage were the means adopted for sending a strong signal to the world that all peoples are united in the quest for lasting peace on earth. It was also significant that the venerable Pope chose Assisi, the sacred ground from where the heroic Christian Francis of Assisi began his radically new way of witnessing to God's love for the world.

The message delivered at Assisi in 1986 is quite relevant today, although the world has moved on with developing new frontiers in human knowledge in science, technology and social sciences along with their challenges. "Call to enduring peace" was the central theme of the Assisi meeting; and it can be achieved only when all forces including religious play their respective roles in promoting it. We believers, more than others, because of our faith, are called upon, as individuals and as a body, to become messengers and artisans of peace. Our history is a witness to violence and bloodshed; loss of precious lives and property in the name of religions vying for primacy; political processes following means not always in the best interest of the populace; economic engagements ignoring those sections of society that do not have access to greater benefits; and social institutions that do not move along with the fast changing dynamics of the contemporary world.

* Vigyan Bhavan, New Delhi, India, 10 November 2011. For further details see "Reports", p. 348-354.

Peace is passed by in many such occasions; and animosity and antagonism get a stronger hold on people's lives unfortunate though it may be.

Jesus came to give us an enduring peace. A peace that the world cannot give (Jn. 14, 27) but only God can grant. It is experienced in the realization of the fact that God alone can provide us that inner peace each human person longs for, fruit of one's deep faith in the power and grace of God. Peace is very much an integral part of each religious tradition; and therefore working for establishing peace amongst people of different religious traditions is no longer an option but a necessary step ordained by each faith tradition.

Peace is a prerequisite for any meaningful growth of society and civilization. It is in peaceful times that the human ingenuity reaches for its furthest expressions, be it in arts, literature, languages or any other sphere of human activity. It is in peaceful times that the human soul reaches out to its creator in the most sublime manner as the mystics and saints have experienced and expressed. What is more the very nature of human self is to prefer peace to violence; and we know violence has never resolved any genuine issues of human society; it only aggravates human anxiety and suffering.

India, an ancient land of several races, cultures, religions, philosophies and traditions has much to offer to all of us in appreciating and promoting a culture of peace. This capital city of New Delhi is a telling example of confluence of different cultures and religions, something you can be proud of. As I just travelled through its streets, I noticed the worship places of different religious communities that dot the skyline of the city. It is certainly an expression of the inherent strength of Indian society to accept and appreciate pluralistic religious traditions.

Conflicts arise often not out of differences but from deficient understanding of each other; and if they are left to charter their own future course, it may not always bring out the best options available to us. We must build a natural appreciation for differences; they do not impoverish; us rather they enrich us in our everyday life and activities. The Vedas of India beautifully illustrates it when it says reality is one but wise men perceive it differently.

Recently you celebrated the wonderful feast of Deepavali and our Pontifical Council sent greetings to all Hindu friends all over the world. In that message we had proposed to focus on the issue of religious freedom, which is central to the dignity of human person. When this fundamental freedom is respected and promoted, it allows believers to be more enthusiastic about cooperating with their fellow citizens in the building of a just and humane social order (*Message for the feast of Deepavali*).

All our exercise of religious dialogue has a purpose: to first of all understand each other better and secondly to harness our energies for charting a harmonious future as followers of different religions. May God in his infinite mercy and grace

grant us the wisdom to see what is essential to our life together as a human family and to ensure a society where love becomes the norm and service of the needy a way of life. May the spirit of Assisi make us believers, builders of peace.

I thank everyone present here and all those who collaborated to make this meeting possible and I convey the Apostolic blessings of our Holy Father Pope Benedict XVI. May God bless each one of you, your family and friends. Peace to you all, *shalom*, *shanti*!

This day happens to be also the birth anniversary of Guru Nanak Dev, the founder of Sikhism. We extend warm and cordial greetings to all our Sikh brothers and sisters on this occasion.

Enhancing collaboration with the believers of different religious traditions

Address to Sikh Religious Leaders*

Cardinal Jean-Louis Tauran
President of the Pontifical Council
for Interreligious Dialogue

(...)

We are happy to know that at the local level there is a good relationship between our two communities. We earnestly desire that this collaboration be constantly shaped and genuinely strengthened day after day, in order for it to achieve national and international dimensions.

The Catholic Church considers seeking to enhance relationships and collaboration with the believers of different religious traditions very important so as to promote and defend the "common ideals in the spheres of religious liberty, human kinship, teaching and education, social welfare and civil order" for justice, peace and development in the world (Pope Paul VI in *Ecclesiam suam*, 1964). Though we belong to two different religions we believe in the Fatherhood of God and Brotherhood of all human beings, and as a preferred option, we strive to authentically attend to the poor, the sick and the suffering, and the socially, economically and culturally downtrodden sections of our society. With profound conviction I wish to state here that we, the Catholics and the Sikhs are called anew to stand and work together, particularly during these times when our ideals and shared values of promoting peace, human solidarity and co-existence structured on religious freedom which is a noble prerogative deriving from the transcendent value of human dignity, are increasingly threatened, challenged and stifled. I wish for nothing better than this that we take on ourselves the noble and moral obligation to defend and promote these ideals and values.

There have been contacts between the Holy See and the Sikh community particularly with the Shiromani Gurdwara Prabandhak Committee (SGPC) since many years. At the invitation of our Pontifical Council, in the name of the Holy Father, Sikh representatives, deputed by the SGPC, have participated in the Assisi

* The Golden Temple, AMRITSAR, India, 11 November 2011. For further details see "Reports", p. 348-354.

Prayer Meets in 1986, 2002 and in the recently concluded Pilgrimage to Assisi on 27th October. We recall with pleasure the visit of Giani Joginder Singh Vedanti to our Pontifical Council in 2002 and the visit of my predecessor Archbishop Michael Fitzerald to this Golden Temple in 2003. These will remain as indelible marks in the history of both of our communities in the area of dialogue and friendship, solidarity and collaboration. While desiring newer initiatives in the direction of strengthening relationships between our communities and of collaborating in the service of humanity, I wish that all our joined efforts for peace, harmony and common wellbeing produce the results we as believers in God earnestly desire. (...).

Learning to live together with mutual trust and respect

Address in Guru Nanak Dev University*

Cardinal Jean-Louis Tauran
President of the Pontifical Council
for Interreligious Dialogue

(...)

His Grace Archbishop Pier Luigi Celata, the Secretary of our Pontifical Council, Father Santiago Michael and I are immensely happy about the mutually enriching sessions we have had this morning whereby both Sikhs and Christians have been able to share some aspects of our faith with each other. In the process, we have also expressed our common concerns and the need to consolidate our mutual relationships and collaboration for the good of the society. I thank the Vice-Chancellor and his team for collaborating with the diocese of Jalandhar in organizing this event, giving us thus the opportunity to deepen, in a spirit of openness and mutual respect, our understanding of each other's faith, and simultaneously bearing witness to our own respective beliefs.

The Pontifical Council for Inter-Religious Dialogue, the Office of the Pope for the promotion of relations with people of other religious traditions, mandated with the responsibility of promoting mutual respect, understanding and collaboration between Catholics and the followers of other religions, is engaged in this task together with the active collaboration of the local Churches and adherents of other religions and all people of good will. Our visit to Amritsar is part of that committed endeavour.

Yesterday, we had the opportunity to visit the Golden Temple. The foundation stone of this temple, I was told, was laid by a Muslim Saint, Hazrat Mian Mir of Lahore. Such was the spirit of openness towards and respect for 'the religiously different other' that served as the bedrock of peaceful coexistence in India. Unfortunately, in certain parts of the world today such genuine gestures of fraternity and religious friendship are increasingly rare, and in some extremely conflictual situations, even totally non-existent. The growing individualistic tendencies, majority-minority divide, denial or suppression of basic human rights including

* Sikh-Christian Seminar, Guru Nanak Dev University, Amritsar, India, 12 November 2011. For further details see "Reports", p. 348-354.

that of freedom of conscience and religion etc., have so greatly increased the level of mistrust, suspicion among individuals and communities that it only leaves a lot to be desired and done, urgently and earnestly, in the areas of peace-building, harmony-harvesting and strengthening religious ties in order for us to counter every aggression against what is true, good and holy in all human persons and in all religions.

On the one hand, religious fundamentalists propagate a culture of hatred and violence in the name of religion, jeopardising thus the very fibre of peaceful coexistence, on the other hand, some of the advocates of secularism criticize religions as outdated. Some even tend to blame religion and the religionists for all problems in society. Despite these challenges, the values that we proclaim as believers are needed for everyone to go on the way that leads to peace, progress and harmony. We are all part of one human family obliged to treat one another as brothers and sisters and to live and work for universal brotherhood under one Fatherhood of God. Mutual respect,. trust and friendship which build peaceful relationships between individuals, groups and communities, are to be fostered and made visible as our way of life. If that happens; we shall truly become what Pope Benedict XVI calls, "a bridge of dialogue and constructive cooperation in the building of a culture of peace to replace the present stalemate of fear, aggression and frustration" (*Homily, 13 May 2009*). Our life as authentic Sikhs and Christians should send the message to the world community that religions haven't lost their lustre or relevance; on the contrary, by their very nature, they remain sources of peace and unity, and not of division and destruction.

I am happy that this seminar is taking place in the University Campus where thousands of young men and women are being trained to become future leaders, rather still, makers of the future. The increasingly globalized world demands that their curriculum be such that helps them learn to live together with mutual trust and respect to contribute towards the common good despite their personal, social, economic, religious and cultural differences. In this, the teachers have a greater role to play with their own inspirational conduct and works. In concluding, I wish to state that by constantly cultivating the virtues of kindness, compassion, gentleness, sensitivity towards others and concern for the common good, all of us, no matter where we are and what religion we belong to, will be able to tread the path of peace and development, nurturing along the way a culture of cooperation and collaboration. (...).

Enhancing Jain-Christian relations and collaboration to promote Justice, Peace and Harmony*

Cardinal Jean-Louis Tauran
President of the Pontifical Council
for Interreligious Dialogue

(...)

We, Christians and Jains have something very common between us. As Christians we believe that life is very precious and we need to uphold life from conception to death. As Jains, you too believe in the preciousness of life. Jaina Dharma upholds the sanctity of life and urges its promotion and protection. Jaina tradition is realistic about the existence of misery and its root cause and propounds a path of purification and deliverance from that which is evil and all that is limiting.

Jaina religion has recourse to conduct as the major means of liberation. Of all moral principles, Ahimsa or non-injury to life, is the focal point around which the whole gamut of religion and philosophy is built.

Thus, our vocation to promote peace and harmony in today's world brings us together with the common bond of mutual affection for each other. Recently, on 27th October 2011, the Holy Father Pope Benedict XVI, taking 300 religious leaders with him on pilgrimage to Assisi, said people who are suspicious of religion cannot be blamed for questioning God's existence when they see believers using religion to justify violence. "All their struggling and questioning is, in part, an appeal to believers to purify their faith so that God, the true God, becomes accessible".

The Pontifical Council for Inter-Religious Dialogue has been taking steps to collaborate with Jains for the last decades. In 1986 H.H. Acharya Shri Tulsi, the 9th Supreme Head of Terapanth was invited to participate in the World Day of Prayer for Peace at Assissi on October 26. As he was unable to attend, he deputed Mr. S.K. Dasani, Chairman of the Transnational Centre for Peace and Non-Violence. From thereon began a series of periodical contacts between the Pontifical Council for Inter Religious Dialogue and the Jain community. I am happy that today we are here to renew our warm friendship and collaboration.

This is very important and vital because today, life is increasingly becoming insecure in the globalized world of ours. Since globalization takes the whole world as a single market, labour is losing its voice; national governments are losing their

* Sushil Muni Ashram, Delhi, India, 13 November 2011. For further details see "Reports", p. 348-354.

power and there is corporate insecurity and volatility of financial capital. Inequality is rising. Unskilled labour has little prospects of employment. Globalization excludes a whole lot of unskilled groups of people giving rise to further impoverishment. Due to privatization, there is loss of guaranteed employment. Many people fail to see how they can have a secure and worthwhile future. Therefore despair stimulates them to withdraw into their community shells often attracted by the fundamentalist movements and trends, resulting in religious fundamentalism and sectarian violence. All this has given rise to ethnic strife, religious conflicts, social unrest and wanton violence. In this context, as religious leaders we need to work together to build our global world with new possibilities for security, peace and justice. This will not be an easy task. We need to pool all our moral and religious resources to give confidence to the insecure world

It is becoming more and more clear that in today's world, our hopes and dreams for peace and justice, for security and freedom can be achieved only through solidarity and dialogue as the singular way to resolve tensions and conflicts between peoples and nations.

We become more and more aware of the ecological disaster hovering over the earth. Unless we change our lifestyle it may be impossible to safeguard our globe. In this context, the simple life-style and the generous attitude prompted by Jain sages and spiritual masters is a sure step to meet the challenges of the contemporary world of consumerism. Ultimately it is the violence done to life out of greed and other passions that causes conflicts among individuals and communities.

Hence, we Christians and Jains join hands together to preserve and promote life with dignity and freedom. (...).

Les chrétiens d'Orient dans le dialogue islamo-chrétien*

Cardinal Jean-Louis Tauran
President of the Pontifical Council
for Interreligious Dialogue

Les chrétiens d'Orient, qui sont-ils ? Au sens large, ce sont tous les catholiques non latins, les orthodoxes et les protestants du Proche et du Moyen Orient. On y inclut aussi les minorités d'Iran, d'Arménie, de Turquie, de l'Inde, du Pakistan, d'Indonésie et d'Ethiopie. Les chrétiens d'Orient ne connaissent pas une organisation centralisée comme le christianisme occidental (je pense au catholicisme romain). La place de la culture, de la langue, la multiplicité des dénominations et des pratiques en font une mosaïque. Je ne vais pas parler de tous ces chrétiens, mais je voudrais limiter mon propos aux chrétiens du Moyen Orient pour des raisons évidentes : ce sont ceux qui nous sont le plus proches, en particulier ceux qui vivent en Terre Sainte, descendants de la première Eglise de Jérusalem.

Le Moyen Orient est massivement musulman, et son islam a connu des périodes fastes. Des villes comme Damas, Bagdad, Le Caire, Istanbul rappellent ce que furent les grandes réalisations de l'islam historique, avec les Omeyades (7ᵉ s.), les Abbassides (du 8ᵉ s. au 13ᵉ s.), les Mamelouks (du 13ᵉ s. au 16ᵉ s.) et les Ottomans (du 16ᵉ s. à 1924). Sans parler de la Mecque et de Médine,

Les chrétiens d'Orient y sont minoritaires et tendent à diminuer. Ils ne sont pas des convertis de l'islam. Ils sont, comme je le disais plus haut, les descendants de la première Eglise de Jérusalem, leurs ancêtres ont été témoins des événements du salut. Littéralement, ils entourent les Lieux saints de leur présence et leur donnent vie par leur prière et leur amour, empêchant qu'ils deviennent de simples musées. Mais ils ont une histoire, une langue et une culture communes avec les musulmans au milieu desquels ils vivent depuis des siècles. C'est pourquoi les relations entre les deux communautés sont traditionnellement bonnes au niveau du dialogue de la vie. Evidemment, ils ont aussi des rapports séculaires avec les communautés juives d'autant plus qu'avec les Juifs, les chrétiens sont spirituellement unis dans la lignée d'Abraham et reconnaissent les prémices de leur foi dans le Premier Testament.

Intervention au Colloque international * *Chrétiens d'Orient : chantiers de recherches et débats contemporains*, organisé par l'Ambassade de France près le Saint-Siège, l'École française de Rome et le Centre Saint-Louis, Rome, 2 décembre 2011.

Il y a eu des périodes de cohabitation féconde entre chrétiens et musulmans: Istanbul, Alexandrie, Jérusalem ont longtemps accueilli tous les croyants. Mais quand les empires se sont effondres et que l'unité de mesure est devenue la nation, il y a eu moins de place pour la diversité, le califat se termine avec la chute de l'Empire ottoman et la naissance de la république d'Atatürk ; l'orthodoxie s'effrite en se soustrayant a l'hégémonie du patriarcat de Constantinople et en donnant naissance à de nouvelles églises nationales. De nouvelles identités s'affirment.

Depuis le 16e siècle, le christianisme est devenu minoritaire en Orient, et l'islam, qui avait perdu de son prestige, a récupéré son identité a partir du moment où il a immigré vers l'Europe. S'il y a eu hier une cohabitation entre peuples divers, aujourd'hui encore, chrétiens et musulmans sont contraints par la géographie et par l'histoire à retrouver un mode de vivre ensemble. La Méditerranée, ce «lac des monothéismes » comme on l'a écrit, pourrait être un lieu de recomposition. Evidemment, il faudrait parler d'autres facteurs qui ont complètement transformé le paysage politique, social, culturel et religieux du Moyen Orient: je pense évidemment au conflit israélo-palestinien non-résolu, à la partition de Chypre, a la situation de l'Irak .... Comme on l'a remarqué, la situation des chrétiens dans cette partie du monde peut être évoquée comme suit: un pays ou il est interdit de construire des églises comme l'Arabie saoudite; des pays ou les chrétiens sont considérés comme non nationaux: le Koweït, les Etats du Golfe, Oman et les États du Maghreb; les pays ou les chrétiens sont autochtones et les Églises apostoliques: Égypte, Syrie, Irak, Jordanie, Palestine, Turquie; et enfin l'exception libanaise ou le Président de la République est, par un accord tacite, chrétien maronite. Tout en proclamant que l'islam est la religion de l'État (sauf en Syrie et au Liban), les Constitutions de ces pays affirment que tous les citoyens sont égaux devant la loi, sans discrimination de race et de religion. Cela évidemment au niveau théorique. La pratique est le plus souvent bien différente.

On doit souligner qu'une collaboration confiante s'est développée entre musulmans et chrétiens au niveau de l'éducation, de la santé, de la culture, de l'économie et de la solidarité. Les écoles catholiques sont particulièrement appréciées par de nombreuses familles musulmanes. Il y a des Parlements où les chrétiens sont représentés, bien qu'il leur soit difficile, sinon impossible, d'accéder aux postes de décision politique (sauf au Liban). Mais ceci dit, il faut rappeler que les conversions de musulmans au christianisme sont pratiquement impossibles. Et dans le cas de mariage mixte, les enfants mineurs sont présumés suivre la religion de leur père. Si la liberté de culte est partout respectée, sauf en Arabie saoudite, et s'il est souvent possible de construire de nouvelles églises, cela n'est pas le cas en Égypte où reste en vigueur une disposition de l'empire ottoman de 1856 qui n'autorise une restauration d'église que sur décret présidentiel.

Si donc les chrétiens se sentent chez eux dans cette partie du monde, s'ils vivent plus ou moins bien leur foi et leur culture, personnellement et communautairement, ils n'en éprouvent pas moins le sentiment d'une certaine précarité, le conflit non-résolu israélo-palestinien et les manifestations d'un islamisme agressif font que beaucoup de chrétiens choisissent l'émigration surtout lorsqu'ils pensent à l'avenir de leurs enfants.

Les chrétiens d'Orient se sentent toujours considérés comme des citoyens de seconde catégorie. Ils se réfèrent souvent au statut de la « dhimmitude ». On comprend alors que ces chrétiens ne soient pas spontanément des enthousiastes du dialogue interreligieux !

Pourtant, si nous prenons en considération le christianisme, l'islam et le judaïsme, on peut relever que ces trois monothéismes favorisent une pédagogie de la rencontre. Certes nous sommes différents et nous devons nous accepter comme tels. Mais nous pouvons mettre à la disposition de la société des valeurs communes qui nous inspirent: respect de la vie, sens de la fraternité, dimension religieuse de l'existence. Dans le fond, Juifs, chrétiens et musulmans, nous croyons que chacun de nous est unique. Alors, il me semble qu'il n'est pas impossible de sensibiliser éducateurs et législateurs à l'opportunité de proposer à ces peuples qui vivent depuis toujours ensemble des règles de conduite telles que:

- Le respect des personnes qui cherchent à scruter l'énigme de la condition humaine à la lumière de leur religion;
- le sens critique qui permet de choisir la vie ou la mort, le vrai ou le faux;
- le souci de la liberté qui suppose une conscience droite, une foi éclairée ;
- L'acceptation de la pluralité qui nous incite à nous considérer différents, mais égaux en dignité, en refusant toutes les formes d'exclusion, en particulier celles invoquant une religion ou une conviction.

Si nous pouvions dire tout cela ensemble, il est sûr que nous aurions devant nous un avenir beaucoup plus serein. N'est-ce pas au fond ces convictions qui sont à l'origine de ce que l'on appelle le « printemps arabe »? Cette jeunesse de certains pays du Maghreb, consciente, cultivée, qui ne supporte plus la dictature, est plus « révoltée » que « révolutionnaire ». Elle est en quête de dignité et de liberté,

Il est vrai que les chrétiens d'Orient ont beaucoup souffert depuis qu'ils existent. Souvent pour survivre, ils ont plus plié que résisté. Mais leur disparition serait une catastrophe, surtout pour les Lieux saints chrétiens, Que peut-on donc faire pour eux ?

D'abord, les aider à rester sur place. Dieu les a plantés dans cette partie du monde et c'est là qu'ils doivent fleurir. Malgré certains phénomènes de fondamentalisme, la présence chrétienne dans la société arabe joue un rôle positif de facilitateur entre les composantes de cette société et de catalyseur pour la convivialité. Ils jouent aussi le rôle de pont entre l'Orient et l'Occident.

Or, pour être un pont, il faut être solidement ancré des deux côtés de la rive. Nos frères dans la foi sont ancrés dans l'Orient qui est leur milieu historique, linguistique, culturel et politique. Ils sont aussi ancrés en Occident par leur foi, leur patrimoine spirituel et leur ouverture intellectuelle.

II faut les visiter, soutenir leurs institutions et travailler à la cause du rétablissement de la justice et de la paix pour qu'advienne une solution rapide du Moyen Orient. Ce que le pape Jean XXIII affirmait dans l'encyclique *Pacem in terris* demeure toujours d'actualité : « Nous devons rétablir les rapports de la vie en société sur les bases de la vérité et de la justice, de l'amour et de la liberté » (n. 40).

Pratiquer le dialogue entre croyants, c'est être convaincu que nous formons tous une famille, qu'il existe une communauté humaine et un bien universel. Mais c'est aussi s'opposer à la xénophobie, à la fermeture des frontières, aux idéologies qui diffusent la haine. Le dialogue entre cultures et entre croyants n'a pas seulement pour but de mieux se connaître pour éviter les conflits, mais il a aussi pour but de nous aider à élaborer une culture qui permette à tous de vivre dans la dignité et la sécurité.

Comme certains d'entre vous le savent, j'ai été pendant quelques années en poste à la Nonciature au Liban, de 1975 à 1982. C'est là que j'ai participé pour la première fois à un groupe d'amitié islamo-chrétienne, guide par un jésuite français, Augustin Dupré Latour. Parlant de ces rencontres, il écrivait : « Croyants de deux religions, nous nous sommes retrouvés, non comme des « sédentaires » satisfaits de ce qu'ils possèdent, mais comme appartenant à la race des « nomades », vivant sous une « tente », des itinérants guides par l'Esprit de Dieu. Nous nous sommes reconnus tout spontanément, non pas comme possédant la vérité divine, mais comme possédés par cette vérité, qui guide, entraine, libère, chacun dans sa ligne propre, plus attaché à sa propre foi. »

Je souhaite que ces journées romaines montrent que, malgré tous les événements de nature à les opposer, chrétiens et musulmans (et juifs) sont capables de se rencontrer, de dialoguer, de refuser les amalgames ; que, contrairement à ce qui est souvent affirmé, les religions ne sont pas facteurs de conflit, mais les croyants sont des personnes de bonne volonté qui contribuent à développer la paix. Avec les chrétiens d'Orient, les Européens, qui eux aussi sont désormais « condamnés » au dialogue interreligieux dans des sociétés de plus en plus plurielles, il nous faut arriver à un réel sens de l'altérité, accepter nos différences, se réjouir de nombreux terrains de rencontre. Il ne s'agit pas de négocier ou de faire des concessions sur ce que nous croyons. Il ne s'agit pas de convertir l'autre, même si le dialogue interreligieux favorise souvent les conversions. II s'agit de se connaitre pour s'aimer et créer du bonheur autour de soi. Soyons nous-mêmes ! Non pour imposer nos convictions, mais pour les proposer. Pèlerins de la vérité au milieu des contradictions de l'histoire, en dépit de nos incohérences, soyons capables par notre géné-

rosité, notre douceur et notre persévérance de purifier notre mémoire et notre cœur pour faire en sorte que la sagesse humaine se rencontre avec la sagesse de Dieu.

Parce que nous distinguons le politique et le religieux, le temporel et le spirituel, nous, chrétiens, avons le devoir de susciter toutes initiatives qui prouvent à quel point les croyants sont une ressource pour la cite. Le pape Benoit XVI, l'a admirablement dit sur l'esplanade des mosquées à Jérusalem: « Ceux qui honorent le Dieu unique croient qu'il tiendra les êtres humains responsables de leurs actions. Les chrétiens affirment que les dons divins de la raison et de la liberté sont à la base de cette responsabilité, la raison ouvre l'esprit à la compréhension de la nature et de la destinée communes de la famille humaine, tandis que la liberté pousse les cœurs à accepter l'autre et à Le servir dans la charité. L'amour indivisible pour le Dieu unique et la charité envers le prochain deviennent ainsi le pivot autour duquel tout tourne. C'est pourquoi nous travaillons inlassablement pour préserver les cœurs humains de la haine, de la colère ou de la vengeance » (12 mai 2009).

Oui, il est salutaire de nous souvenir que notre Dieu est « dialogue » (Trinité) et que dialoguer n'est pas « céder », mais affirmer d'abord nos convictions, pour comprendre ensuite nos accords et nos désaccords et considérer enfin ce qu'ensemble nous pouvons faire pour le bien commun de nos sociétés plurielles.

Je conclus mon propos. Pardonnez-moi si, dans ce temple de la culture française, j'ose vous laisser un message que j'emprunte à un poète anglais, William Blake: «J'ai cherché mon âme et je ne l'ai pas trouvée ; j'ai cherché Dieu, et je ne l'ai pas trouvé ; j'ai cherché mon frère et je les ai trouvés tous les trois ».

IX Conference of Interfaith Dialogue: Social Media and Inter-Religious Dialogue: A New Relationship

Doha, Qatar, 24-26 October 2011

The Ninth Doha Conference on Interfaith Dialogue was held from 24 to 26 October, 2011. According to the Doha International Center for Interfaith Dialogue (DICID), the Qatar Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Qatar University, over 242 participants, Jews, Christians and Muslims, from over 60 countries took part in it.

The theme of the Conference was: "Social Media and Inter-Religious Dialogue: A New Relationship."

The sub-themes were:

1) The Emergence of Communication Technology: History and Development;

2) The Benefits of Using Social Media in Interfaith Dialogue;

3) Reflection of the use of the Social Media on the Communities;

4) The Pros and Cons of the Social Communication in Serving Interfaith Dialogue issues;

5) Developing Religious Framework and Ethical Regulations to protect Societies from Misuse of Social Networking Tools.

H.E. Msgr. Patrick Kelly, Archbishop of Liverpool, England, represented the Pontifical Council for Interreligious Dialogue at the Conference and delivered the following keynote speech at the inaugural session.

THE ETHICS OF THE USE OF THE NEW TECHNOLOGY*

H.E. Msgr. Patrick KELLY
Archbishop of Liverpool, England

What makes a man a prophet is not eloquence but vision. For those who would walk the way of Prophets in the face of modern means of social communication it is fitting to ask: do they increase eloquence or vision? Do they make us both more powerful as transmitters but in equal measure more attentive, intelligent, judicious and so responsible learners? And the fruit of authentic learning is ethical action.

I want to set out the epistemological issues raised by what is now possible and so impressive in terms of speed of communication and the numbers who can share in the awareness and so in coordinated action. A priest called Joseph Cardijn founded a movement called "Young Christian Workers:" his pattern for them was "See, Judge, Act". My concern is that we make it possible for the thousands, who through modern means of social communication immediately see, to be able to act not so much in haste but with wisdom. And I am convinced: just as there is no such thing as authentic instant coffee there is no such thing as instant wisdom. I fear lest the middle step is not taken seriously: Judge. For Joseph Cardijn three ingredients were essential for any meeting of the Young Christian Workers: a Gospel Inquiry: a Social Inquiry: and Review of Past Action. Nothing hasty or precipitate; nothing left immune from critical evaluation. Inquiry, Review, Judgment are essential for anyone to come to a quality encouraged for anyone who lives faithfully before One God, Transcendent Lord, Creator, Judge. That quality is to come to an ever higher viewpoint. I recall the description given by the first Pope of Rome named Gregory for a leader in the church: a watchman must take his stand on the heights so that he can serve the people by taking a wider survey. This is a quality greatly to be desired by anyone with such a place that they are leaders in a society; and they must be willing to pay the price such a quality will demand of them.

Allow me now to assess the qualities, nature, potential of such means of communication as Twitter, in the light of four precepts which I have learned to obey

* A lecture held by H. E. Msgr. Patrick Kelly, Archbishop of Liverpool, England, and Member of the Pontifical Council for Inter-Religious Dialogue of the Holy See, at the 9th Doha Conference of Interfaith Dialogue.

if I am to accomplish sound judgment and authentic, wholesome action. And as you may have observed already, my concern is wisdom: wisdom is a quality of pilgrims: the wise person in the words one of Solomon's Proverbs is one who seizes every opportunity to grow in wisdom.[1]

The first precept: be attentive to the data. The modern, speedy, means of social communication can contribute greatly to sharing of data, of information. But we need to be attentive to all the data. And it is healthy to notice how selective each one of us is in seeing, in hearing: just as our ears will select among myriad sounds our own name spoken in a crowded room, so our eyes select that which already interests us. It is inevitable, especially if there is haste, that Twitter will be highly selective. I need to revisit a serious journal to be attentive to what I just did not notice on a first reading. I agree that if a book is worth reading, it is worth reading twice, and if it's worth reading twice it's worth owning and being subject of close scrutiny. And one essential source for us to be attentive to all the data is dialogue: alerting one another to what slipped by our notice.

But from data, to which attention has been given, the next wise step is not action, nor reaction.

The second step, the second precept is: be intelligent. Once we are satisfied that, to the best of our ability and shared resources we have been attentive to the data, to what the facts are, the next step is to ask: why are the facts like this? Must they be so? Are they the consequence of deliberately chosen actions based on a coherent, integrated, rational, logical plan to achieve a specific wholesome purpose? And if the purpose is not wholesome the facts cannot be ultimately coherent. Or are they the chaotic consequence of inattentiveness to all the facts, to hasty readings of a situation, to bad calls, irrational, illogical actions? It can be observed that corrupt, inattentive, unintelligent, irrational, irresponsible minds have a flair for choosing the most inadequate action: decline digs its own grave with relentless consistency. It is never ethically sound.

Asking why things are as they are impels us to name that which is coherent, integrated, and wholesome but no less vigorously name the absurd, literally inexcusable, that is, it does not yield to analysis "ex causis." and that is chaos. When this is sin the quality that needs to come into play is forgiveness since that alone ultimately deals with the utterly absurd, the causeless, reason-less, close to noth-

[1] Proverbs 9:9.

ingness data; and forgiveness is that ethical response which is very close to accomplishing a new creation.

To answer the question "why" needs reflective, calm study, patient application; dialogue, sustained conversation with others is all but essential in the search to read, interpret, give an adequate account. Hasty means of communication, calls for immediate action do not by themselves serve this essential step for human beings: for, while, when it has nothing to do, a palm tree grows, a camel sleeps, human beings ask questions and especially, why is it so, must it be so, does it make sense?

So the ground is prepared for the third step, the third precept: be attentive, ask "what?" be intelligent, ask "why?" be rational: come to the act, the activity, to personal creative accomplishment, judge: "and is it so?" To appreciate the significance of the act which is judgment, and it is an activity not passive, we may notice: many complain, even boast of their bad memories, and memory is largely beyond our control: but few acknowledge their bad judgments: their bad calls: their rash, hasty pronouncing a last word on some issue. Judgment is an act painfully, constantly refined by reviewing past judgments: by acknowledging how bias made us block out unpalatable facts: how prejudices enticed us to ignore the deep stirring that a reading of "why" was preferred to other readings so as to reject explanations that would cast us in a bad light; how the glamour of resolute, apparently courageous leadership, made us hasty, rash to reach a conclusion.

And I know nothing so critical of bad, hasty calls, as serious dialogue: nothing else so undermines bias, prejudice, the temptation to stride proudly forward as dialogue with the lowly in spirit and gentle in heart.

To stop with what Twitter and similar means provide can cut us off from adequate resources, which will demand serious interpretation and so provide the basis for adequate, wholesome, complete judgments.

It is clearly demanding to give such space and energy to the task of knowing. And I use the word "energy" on purpose. I have found that the part of my studies which most prepared me to deal with practical issues was the study of metaphysics; this is especially true, however surprising it might seem in my determination authentically to involve in the life of the Church and especially in our worship and prayer people with special needs, for whom our typical ways of communicating are inadequate. Metaphysics made my head spin and ache; but the process I then had to bring into my whole frame of mind and the pain they caused are exactly

the same, and that includes the pain, when dealing with matters of the most practical nature still today. For some time I have been concerned that in the economic challenges facing so many countries, one root of the problem is inadequate epistemology among those engaged in finance: they do not know what it means to know; one sign of that is careless use of metaphor to give an account of actual situations that impinge on the daily life of tens of thousands.

And one phrase used in my own country that evades the demands of rigorous commitment to observing, understanding, judging is "common sense." In my own culture I see over and over again the truth of these words:

"Common sense commonly feels itself Omni-competent in practical affairs, is commonly blind to long-term consequences of policies and courses of action, commonly is unaware of the admixture of common nonsense in its more cherished convictions and slogans."[2]

And only such judgments ground the fourth step, and permit obedience to the fourth precept. Be responsible. Act not out of pride, fear, greed, anger, superficiality, haste rather let it be in a translation I offer of the title of Pope Benedict's Letter "Caritas in Veritate": "Concern grounded in Truth:" and the truth cannot be attained unless being attentive and being intelligent has borne the fruit of sound judgment, good calls, coherent reading of how things stand.

And action so serenely based enables serene, confident, consistent dialogue from, for and in shared ethically sound action. And such shared action enables hands to be joined as one, eyes of those who share one carefully discerned vision can with new confidence look into the eyes of the other because they have one goal, and heart begins to speak to heart.

Such action deserves this description of what is the driving imperative and form of life: to move and to be moved by love. Love, understood as grounded in the labours of authentic knowledge is not fragile, nor to be located in a world of fantasy or sentiment. It is the ultimate realism. For it is only possible when bias, prejudice, fettered frame of mind and hardened hearts have been healed. And there are good grounds to acknowledge that such healing is rooted in an ultimate compassion and mercy.

[2] Bernard J.F. Lonergan S.J. , *Method in Theology*, Darton, Longman and Todd Ltd, London 1971.

Finally, we may note: this whole conference is an example of following through the path of the four steps, the four precepts. For it is a response to facts, data: the facts, the data, are the sudden events when speedy communication was witnessed in different places, with similarities and dissimilarities; and that outpouring of sharing led to many actions and those actions have been met by a variety of reactions and so far the sharing, the actions and the reactions have brought about a variety of new situations. All of this has led wise people to ask questions: what must be observed carefully in all that has come to pass? How are these events in their totality to be interpreted, and what are the reasons for the similarities and the dissimilarities in the sharing, the actions, the reactions and where we are today? How are they to be evaluated, to be judged, in terms of responding to the overall situation and the aspirations of human hearts and minds? What responsible comment, what wise words shall a gathering such as this articulate as a fruit of their being attentive, intelligent, and rational? And the method chosen is precisely a conference: in English the prefix "con" is significant: it often signifies the road of dialogue with all its demands: conference, conversation; consultation. We may have confidence, and there is that prefix again, that the fruits of these days will be wholesome, for the method is sound.

The Second Seminar of the Catholic-Muslim Forum Hosted by The Royal Aal Al-Bayt Institute For Islamic Thought

Reason, Faith and the Human Person

Baptism Site of Jesus Christ, Jordan, 21-23 November 2011

LA PERSONNE HUMAINE A LA LUMIERE DE LA FOI CHRETIENNE*

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Réunis pour un échange en profondeur, théologiens musulmans et chrétiens, nous nous devons d'approfondir les ressources spirituelles de chacune de nos traditions en vue de servir par notre dialogue l'avènement d'un monde de justice et de paix. Le chaos de l'actualité ne doit pas nous laisser croire que nos efforts sont insignifiants, car s'efforcer de penser ensemble avec justesse tout en scrutant la volonté de Dieu commence déjà à changer la situation. Le reste est dans les mains de Dieu, mais nous ne pouvons pas nous dispenser de cette responsabilité. Dans le monde qui a précédé le Christianisme et l'Islam, il n'a pas manqué de philosophes et de sages qui ont réfléchi à la condition humaine. Ce que les croyants ont apporté de neuf est la conscience, pour l'être humain, de sa dignité de créature. De cette dignité découle des droits et des devoirs que chaque tradition s'est attachée à expliciter.

Dans le bref temps qui m'est imparti pour présenter ce qui peut être dit de la personne humaine à la lumière de la foi chrétienne, je voudrais commencer par faire mention des études sur la personne, écrites par l'un des plus grands penseurs du XXe siècle, le philosophe Paul Ricœur (1913-2005).[1] Il faut le mentionner parce que l'ampleur de son érudition comme l'audience de ses travaux ont une dimension interna-

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[1] Cf. Paul Ricœur, « La *personne* et la référence identifiante », in : *Soi-même comme un autre*, Paris, Seuil, 1990, pp. 39-54 ; et : « La personne » (trois études), in : *Lectures 2, la contrée des philosophes*, Paris, Seuil, 1992 pp.189-221.

tionale, et donnent ainsi une bonne idée de ce que nos contemporains peuvent avoir comme pensée systématique sur la personne, à partir de la philosophie et des sciences humaines. En quelques mots, la pensée de Ricœur sur la personne s'organise autour d'une double recherche, sur l'éthique de l'homme agissant et souffrant, et sur le langage de l'homme parlant, produisant des récits ou écrivant des textes. Ainsi se trouvent synthétisées des pans entiers de la recherche philosophique poursuivie par Ricœur tout au long du XX^e^ siècle, sur la phénoménologie, les conséquences de la psychanalyse, les sciences du langage et du texte, l'herméneutique, et enfin les fondements du droit et de la justice, qui couronnèrent son œuvre. La constitution de la personne humaine, dit-il en substance, a pour socle, en tant que l'homme est agissant et souffrant, le souhait d'une vie accomplie, avec et pour les autres, dans des institutions justes. On retrouve cette triade quand il s'agit de l'homme parlant, et tel est l'apport des philosophies du langage, si déterminantes au XX^e^ siècle, à la conception de la personne : la personne est unique (ce qui renvoie à l'estime de soi qui accompagne le souhait d'une vie accomplie), mais dans un dialogue (l'interlocution renvoyant à la sollicitude tournée vers les autres), dans une langue (qui nous précède comme institution, et dont la justesse est ici de permettre de se comprendre les uns les autres).[2]

Ce bref rappel va nous permettre d'exposer comment la foi chrétienne, loin de se trouver étrangère à de telles perspectives, éclaire de sa lumière spécifique les racines d'une telle conception, en redonnant de la profondeur et du relief à ces analyses.[3] Nous développerons trois points, avant une brève conclusion qui veut simplement relancer le débat.

[2] Cf. Paul Ricœur, « Approches de la personne », *Esprit* n° 160, Paris, mars-avril 1990, pp. 115-130. Il est intéressant de noter combien la catégorie de *promesse* vient alors au centre de l'attention. Ainsi, écrit Ricœur : « La *promesse* conjoint en fait la triade linguistique et la triade éthique. D'un côté la promesse est un acte de discours parmi d'autres. Elle indique simplement la règle constitutive selon laquelle dire : « Je promets », c'est se placer sous l'obligation de faire quelque chose. Mais cet engagement implique plus que soi-même. Qu'est-ce qui, en effet, m'oblige à tenir ma promesse? Trois choses : d'une part, tenir sa promesse c'est se maintenir soi-même dans l'identité de celui qui a dit et qui demain fera. Ce maintien de soi annonce l'estime de soi. D'autre part, c'est toujours à quelqu'un que l'on promet : « Je te promets de faire ceci ou cela. » ; et le renversement que nous avions observé à propos de la reconnaissance mutuelle se produit ici : c'est parce que quelqu'un compte sur moi, attend de moi que je tienne ma promesse, que je me sens moi-même lié. Enfin, l'obligation de tenir sa promesse équivaut à l'obligation de préserver l'institution du langage, dans la mesure où celle-ci, par sa structure fiduciaire, repose sur la confiance de chacun en la parole de chacun ; à cet égard le langage apparaît non seulement comme une institution, mais comme une institution de distribution : de distribution de la parole, si l'on ose dire. Dans la promesse, la structure triadique du discours et la structure triadique de l'*éthos* se recouvrent mutuellement. » (pp. 123-124)

[3] Pour un bref historique, on pourra consulter : Michel Meslin, « Christianisme : La notion de personne », in : Frédéric Lenoir et Ysé Tardan-Masquelier, *Encyclopédie des Religions*, Nouvelle édition, Tome 2, Paris, Bayard, 2000, pp. 1709-1712.

1. Le Dieu Unique comme unificateur de la personne

Trois aspects majeurs nous retiendront ici : la source en théologie trinitaire du concept de personne comme nœud de relations ; la structure vocationnelle de la Révélation qui suscite les personnes comme sujets de leur histoire et de leur destin ; le quadruple défi, devant Dieu et dans le monde d'aujourd'hui, de la construction des personnes.

1.1. La source en théologie trinitaire du concept de personne comme nœud de relations.

Il ne faut pas hésiter à le dire, le christianisme des premiers siècles, à partir de sa puissante réflexion trinitaire, a invité la culture antique à comprendre l'être humain d'abord comme personne plutôt que comme nature. Les premières générations chrétiennes vivent dans une culture où le concept de « personne » n'est pas vraiment construit. Il y a plusieurs pistes : *persona*, selon la première signification du mot, désigne le rôle, le masque de théâtre. Il faut regarder aussi dans la culture de l'époque qui est sujet de droit : dans le droit romain, le vrai sujet de droit ou le citoyen, le seul à être vraiment considéré comme une personne responsable, est le propriétaire, l'homme qui possède ; bien évidemment, les femmes, les enfants, les esclaves, ne sont pas considérés comme des personnes. Par la suite, peu à peu s'élaborent dans la théologie trinitaire les concepts de *nature* et de *personne*, *nature* pour dire la communauté d'être, et *personne* pour dire la particularité de celui qui agit. Ces deux concepts vont être mis en dialectique, mais surtout en affirmant *la relation*. Fondamentalement, le Dieu unique en trois personnes est, en lui-même, relation. Pour le dire d'une manière un peu compacte : l'Absolu atteste qu'il est en lui-même relationnel en demeurant Dieu tout en entrant dans le relatif, par son Verbe, et son Verbe incarné.

Qu'apprenons-nous sur la personne à partir de la Révélation du Dieu unique qui est Père-Fils-Esprit, un seul Dieu ? Une image nous le fera comprendre : il n'y a qu'un seul geste : aimer : en premier lieu, aimer, comme origine sans origine, consiste à donner, ce qui caractérise le Père et Dieu tout entier. Mais aimer c'est aussi, en relations, cette autre action qui est d'accueillir ou de recevoir. Tel est le geste du Fils de Dieu qui accomplit l'autre face du don ou de la générosité de source : recevoir, et donc redonner. Il y a enfin, et c'est toujours l'unique acte d'aimer, un geste qui ne fait pas nombre comme lorsque l'on compte, un geste qui est le lien et l'identité entre donner et recevoir, à savoir : partager. Tel est ce qu'accomplit le *Pneuma*, le Souffle partagé du Père et du Fils, l'Esprit-Saint. Aimer, en un seul acte, c'est donner, recevoir, partager.

Par analogie, nous apprenons ici beaucoup sur les caractéristiques de la personne humaine, tout entière relationnelle pour être sujet de sa vie et de son histoire devant Dieu et avec les hommes. La personne ne se trouve elle-même que dans la générosité qui donne la vie, elle est aussi ce qui accueille la vie, et elle est relation avec les autres personnes pour partager la vie. Contre les dérives contemporaines qui font confondre personne et individu, il faut donc placer au centre de ce qui constitue la personne, le Verbe, dans sa triple dimension de Parole créatrice, de Verbe incarné, et de parole obéissant à l'Esprit-Saint, dans un agir et un être unificateur de toute humanité.

1.2. La structure vocationnelle de la Révélation qui suscite les personnes comme sujets de leur histoire et de leur destin.

Ainsi, après avoir compris la personne comme essentiellement en relation, recevant sa vie et sa vocation de Dieu, et partageant sa vie avec les autres personnes dans la mise en œuvre de ses dons, il est intéressant de souligner combien la structure même de la Révélation comme appel et réponse suscite les personnes comme sujets de leur histoire et de leur destin. *C'est la Parole de Dieu qui, comme parole adressée, appelle et suscite quelqu'un qui, alors, peut répondre et se tenir sous le jugement et la promesse de cette parole.* Dans un certain nombre de religions, parmi les religions à écritures et à fondateurs, on voit très bien que la révélation de l'absolu n'advient pas par une parole prophétique qui trancherait dans l'histoire, mais par le dépouillement de l'intériorité ou bien une contemplation du monde. En tout cas cela n'advient pas « par les oreilles », et l'Absolu ici est impersonnel ; tandis que dans les religions prophétiques, un Dieu qui parle est immédiatement un Dieu personnel, qui suscite une réponse personnelle.

Un Dieu qui parle n'est pas quelque chose de vague au-dessus de nous. Ce qui constitue l'homme en sa responsabilité plénière est l'écoute d'un Autre, Dieu, qui n'est pas moins que quelqu'un. On voit cela évidemment dans les récits bibliques de vocations prophétiques, où est décrite la conscience d'une intimité extraordinaire. Dieu lui-même est montré dans certains textes, non seulement comme Père, mais aussi avec des entrailles de mère, à la fois consolateur, et continuant à vouloir alliance et amitié avec l'être humain, alors même que celui-ci n'arrive pas à quitter son péché. Cela représente un déplacement dans la conscience humaine à propos de la représentation de Dieu : il n'est pas une sorte de divinité ou d'absolu lointain qui voudrait être craint pour sa puissance, il est celui qui veut partager sa vie. Un enfant m'a dit un jour : « C'est simple, Il est venu chez nous pour que nous allions chez lui » ! Il faut la simplicité d'un enfant pour découvrir le dessein de Dieu depuis l'origine, qui tient en deux propositions : pour nous par-

tager sa vie, il vient d'abord partager la nôtre. C'est le fait de rejoindre, d'être avec, de vivre ensemble, qui est présenté ici comme le plus divin : le partage de la vie est montré dans la tradition chrétienne comme l'essentiel même du destin de ce que nous sommes appelés à devenir comme personnes humaines. Cela mène loin.

1.3. Le quadruple défi, devant Dieu et dans le monde d'aujourd'hui, de la construction des personnes.

La structuration des sujets, dans les cultures contemporaines, séculières ou religieuses, affronte un quadruple défi : celui du choix de soi, celui du rapport à l'autre, celui de la résistance au mal, celui du rapport au temps.

En un temps du « tout, tout de suite, tout seul » (contre la foi, l'espérance et la charité : le contraire même de l'esprit chrétien), tout être humain est invité à passer du non-choix au choix de soi, et du soi éternel. Passer du non-choix d'une existence où l'on se disperse sans personnalité (dans le « divertissement » au sens pascalien du mot, dans un tourbillon de mots, de sons, d'images, où plus rien n'est distinct et toutes les apparences contradictoires), au choix de soi : qui veux-je être et devenir, dans quelle durée, avec quelles solidarités, dans une attitude de responsabilité ?

En un temps où l'autre et le différent font peur, le rapport à l'altérité devient toujours plus important : dans une vie esthète ou irresponsable, le sujet reste devant le rien, qui à la fin l'ennuie, même si on multiplie les expériences. Prenant ses responsabilités, le sujet se place devant lui-même, au miroir de la propre estime de soi sans laquelle on ne peut durer ni s'engager éthiquement dans la vie bonne. Mais surtout, dans la foi et dans la prière, il peut, avec humour vu la disproportion, se tenir devant Dieu, et à partir de ce point développer une manière de se rapporter aux autres qui soit amour de don et d'oubli de soi.

En un temps où la perception du mal risque d'étouffer l'espérance, nous est proposée une spiritualité attentive à la résistance au mal. Avec des passages à faire : du « tout se vaut » au discernement entre le bien le mal, sans oublier que la Loi dernière est l'amour de don, contre toute aliénation. *Deus caritas est.* Dieu est Amour. Dans cette résistance au mal, la mémoire de la souffrance doit être aussi prise en compte. Cette mémoire-là est longue chez les hommes, plus que celle du bonheur, hélas, et elle a besoin d'une guérison effective, et non pas illusoire.

En un temps enfin où c'est le rapport au temps qui est atteint : éclaté, écartelé aussi entre temps libre et temps contraint, le croyant, qui sait la patience des genèses et des enfantements, est invité à une maturation dans le rapport au temps : il faut passer de l'instantané à l'historique et au durable avec le Dieu de la promesse et de la fidélité, et découvrir à l'intérieur du temps l'Eternel en personne…

Quand le besoin de commémoration ne suffit pas à masquer les déficits de tradition ou de transmission, quand l'avenir demeure infigurable, il est un rapport au temps établi par Dieu, qui guérit en quelque sorte, peu à peu, les trois extases du temps.

Le passé peut être pardonné, être objet non seulement de repentance qui purifie la mémoire, mais aussi matière à re-création, quand au lieu d'être enfermés dans ce qui s'est passé, nous pouvons envisager ensemble ce qui est de nouveau possible. L'avenir peut être à nouveau ouvert, à des possibles réels et non pas seulement à des souhaitables utopiques, pourvu que vienne à notre rencontre le Dieu qui fait toutes choses nouvelles, et nous rend, jour après jour, contemporains de sa présence qui nous appelle à la résurrection. Alors le présent est plein et non pas vidé par le néant, il est germe d'éternité pour une histoire commune en genèse du Royaume, il peut être désigné comme grâce, unifiant la personne dans l'espace de temps qu'il lui est donné de parcourir...

2. La personne en tant que raisonnable et croyante : foi et raison comme obéissance et comme écoute.

Dans le monde contemporain, à dominante scientifique et technologique, il faut souligner la puissance d'intelligibilité, rationnelle et spirituelle en même temps, que donne l'exercice simultané de la foi et de la raison, l'une et l'autre considérées comme obéissance et comme écoute. Le point de départ requis par la réflexion est ici la vocation de la personne humaine à la liberté.

Le Concile Vatican II, dans sa Constitution pastorale sur l'Eglise dans le monde de ce temps, s'exprimait ainsi, au §17 sur le rapport entre la dignité de l'être humain et la grandeur de la liberté :

> *Cette liberté, nos contemporains l'estiment grandement et ils la poursuivent avec ardeur. Et ils ont raison. Souvent cependant ils la chérissent d'une manière qui n'est pas droite, comme la licence de faire n'importe quoi, pourvu que cela plaise, même le mal. Mais la vraie liberté est en l'homme un signe privilégié de l'image divine. Car Dieu a voulu le laisser à son propre conseil pour qu'il puisse de lui-même chercher son Créateur et, en adhérant librement à lui, s'achever ainsi dans une bienheureuse plénitude. La dignité de l'homme exige donc de lui qu'il agisse selon un choix conscient et libre, mû et déterminé par une conviction personnelle et non sous le seul effet de poussées instinctives ou d'une contrainte extérieure. L'homme parvient à cette dignité lorsque, se délivrant de toute servitude des passions, par le choix libre du bien, il marche vers sa destinée et prend soin de s'en procurer réellement les moyens par son ingéniosité. Ce n'est toutefois que par*

le secours de la grâce divine que la liberté humaine, blessée par le péché, peut s'ordonner à Dieu d'une manière effective et intégrale. Et chacun devra rendre compte de sa propre vie devant le tribunal de Dieu, selon le bien ou le mal accompli (cf. 2 Co 5,10).

Et les Pères du Concile ajoutaient, au §21,3 :

L'Église tient que la reconnaissance de Dieu ne s'oppose en aucune façon à la dignité de l'homme, puisque cette dignité trouve en Dieu lui-même ce qui la fonde et ce qui l'achève. Car l'homme a été établi en société, intelligent et libre, par Dieu son Créateur. Mais surtout, comme fils, il est appelé à l'intimité même de Dieu et au partage de son propre bonheur.

L'important est de montrer comment la personne humaine, quand elle tient au Logos, conjugue obéissance et liberté aussi bien dans la foi que dans la raison.

2.1. La personne conjugue obéissance et liberté, aussi bien dans la foi qu'avec la raison.

La liberté est une valeur fondamentale pour la personne humaine comme pour le monde contemporain. La liberté dernière n'est pas la liberté de choix, qu'elle inclut cependant ; elle n'est pas non plus simple absence de contraintes. La liberté de la personne croyante est une liberté attentive, l'obéissance croyante est une obéissance fraternelle. La liberté qui reprend et surélève toutes les autres formes de liberté est créatrice ; elle est la trace du Créateur en l'être humain. Celui-ci n'est pas seulement nature, avec sa consistance propre, il est laissé libre, pour écrire une histoire ouverte à la grâce.

La question décisive est celle de l'autre. Le véritable « autre » de l'homme n'est pas le monde. Adam peut bien nommer ce qui emplit la terre, son véritable vis-à-vis commence avec Eve. C'est avec l'autre humain, dans sa différence, que nous pouvons commencer d'envisager notre histoire. Allons-nous donner sens à l'histoire humaine qui s'ouvre ? Ou allons-nous entrer dans une histoire de servitude et de mort, de rapports entre des maîtres et des esclaves? Ainsi s'énonce la détermination de la liberté de source. C'est une « liberté-avec » : pour et avec l'Autre divin et l'autre humain, inséparablement, et une liberté attentive : l'ouverture à l'Autre divin ne se sépare pas de l'attention extrême, vulnérable, généreuse, à autrui. Réciproquement, l'attention à autrui veut porter sur lui un autre regard, à l'imitation du regard de Dieu, qui est gracieux et n'enferme ni dans le passé, ni dans le manque d'apparence, et moins encore dans la faute.

Nous sommes invités à bousculer notre idéal d'autonomie, entendue d'ordinaire comme la volonté de ne pas être gouvernés par la loi d'un autre. Certes, il faut refuser la violence qui aliène la personne. Mais la personne advient à elle-même en sortant de l'égoïsme individualiste et mortifère. Les implications concrètes sont nombreuses pour le devenir des personnes. Ainsi par exemple, les critères de réussite sociale ne peuvent être ceux de pseudo-« gagneurs » mis en vedette par les médias ; l'éducation réduite à une sélection est un non-sens, tout comme une société « à deux vitesses », pour les riches et pour les pauvres ; l'essence du sport n'est pas la compétition ; l'opposition d'un hémisphère riche et d'un hémisphère où sévissent guerre, injustice et famine, n'est plus tolérable. En définitive, si la liberté du croyant est celle que Dieu lui donne, les peurs tombent. Ni la mort, ni le mal ne nous empêcheront de nous relever sans cesse avec Lui sur un chemin de libération, c'est-à-dire de liberté attentive à l'autre.

Pas plus que la liberté dernière n'est la liberté abstraite, individualiste ou « libérale », pas plus le modèle de l'obéissance ne peut être pour la foi la discipline militaire, le patriarcat autoritaire, ou la hiérarchie fonctionnelle des entreprises performantes. Toutes les raisons d'obéir sont reliées au modèle de l'obéissance du croyant à la volonté de Dieu notre Père, dans la liberté de l'Esprit. Les autres raisons peuvent être valables, elles sont secondaires. A l'imitation de Jésus, nous pouvons apprendre à nous décentrer toujours plus vers le Père et vers les hommes, dans une existence non pas dépossédée, mais remise, donnée. Obéissance qui est d'abord et avant tout une écoute : c'est le même verbe qui, dans la Bible, traduit écouter et obéir.

Si obéissance et liberté se conjuguent dans la foi comme dans l'exercice de la raison, c'est que les points de départ ont beau être différents pour le philosophe et le théologien (le philosophe commence par l'étonnement, dit Aristote ; le théologien commence avec l'adoration ou l'admiration), la Vérité nous précède, aussi bien dans notre intériorité que dans la création : elle est toujours plus grande, tandis que la personne elle-même grandit en la cherchant.

2.2. Personne et vérité.

La vérité est de trois ordres, dont aucun n'annule l'autre mais au contraire le présuppose.

La vérité est d'abord d'ordre *noétique*, point focal de toute rationalité, pour laquelle il s'agit de la meilleure adéquation possible entre le sujet connaissant et l'« objet » connu, quel que soit le mode de cette adéquation. L'extraordinaire réussite et puissance des technologies contemporaines dit bien la prédominance dans notre culture de ce niveau.

Mais la vérité est aussi tâche *éthique*, et il s'agit cette fois du rapport entre sujets : considérer autrui comme un sujet, et non pas comme l'objet de nos désirs ou de nos projets. La distinction et le rapport entre les ordres doivent être respectés : une action ou un jugement ne sauraient être éthiques sans d'abord prendre soin de connaître le plus objectivement possible ce dont il est question ; nul, parce qu'il a des convictions éthiques, ou parce qu'il est croyant, n'est dispensé de l'analyse. Mais réciproquement l'erreur serait d'ignorer le niveau éthique, en revenant spontanément en toutes choses aux solutions techniques ou technocratiques, aux avis des « experts ». Il est indispensable d'avoir des plans pour la justice, ou pour la paix; cela ne donnera rien si la justice, la paix, ne sont pas voulues.

Et, enfin, il y a une vérité de troisième ordre, *religieuse*, qui ne saurait se dispenser d'être éthique, ni de la rigueur de la connaissance, mais qui s'atteste dans sa différence. Pour les fidèles du Christ, la vérité la plus haute est Dieu lui-même, mais à qui à travers le Crucifié en personne, montre le corps à corps qu'il entretient lui-même en la personne de son Fils avec tout homme de souffrances. Cette vérité-là juge toutes les autres, en même temps qu'elle est promesse. Elle juge en particulier les éthiques aristocratiques qui ne font pas de place à l'exclu, et elle appelle une réflexion sur la puissance que donnent toutes les rationalités.

Pour être la promesse qui sera tenue, la vérité n'est pas d'abord ce qui nous donne raison, mais ce qui nous juge. Chacun peut saisir ici le renversement radical : il ne s'agit plus des milliards des questions que nous pourrions nous poser sur un objet du langage qui est « dieu » ; mais il s'agit de la question que Dieu lui-même nous pose, une question unique et double : « qui dis-tu que Je Suis ? », contre toute idolâtrie et: « où est ton frère ? », contre toute violence et dans le sens de la fraternité.

En contrepoint, comment n'être pas frappés par ce trait de notre culture qui est de faire prédominer une conception de la vérité comme ce qui se maîtriserait, sans reste en quelque sorte, dès lors que l'on aurait compris. Face à cela, c'est l'acte même de comprendre qui doit être conçu autrement. Si comprendre consiste à rejeter l'altérité, en ramenant au « même » du déjà bien connu, ce n'est pas là comprendre. Connaître et comprendre l'autre personne, dont l'histoire et les projets, la mémoire et l'imaginaire, les contraintes et les désirs, la culture et les déterminations sont si différents, cela ne se peut qu'en se rejoignant et en partageant les choses de l'existence. C'est qu'il en est ainsi de Dieu : la voie royale pour le connaître est d'exister comme Lui le veut. « Quiconque aime et né de Dieu et connaît Dieu" (1 Jn 4, 7). Au fil du temps comprendre l'autre personne, ce sera ne pas se laisser aller à penser que la mainmise est possible sur le mystère qui le constitue. Au plan de la pensée il ne s'agit pas seulement de la bienheureuse ironie socratique, qui permet de savoir, au moins, que l'on ne sait pas. C'est aussi la profonde humilité du savant, qui le fait chercher davantage, parce qu'il mesure l'immensité de ce qu'il ne

sait pas. C'est, pour le théologien, la vigilance absolue qui doit être la sienne pour mesurer la différence qualitative infinie entre sa parole et la Parole de Dieu. Connaître et interpréter la Parole de Dieu, ce n'est pas la maîtriser mais la servir, et faire écho à son mystère.

La raison qui est matrice ou source d'unité de tous les types de rationalité trouve là ce qui est pour ainsi dire son « ultime » à l'œuvre dans le concret : la norme d'une justice plus haute que la justesse pourtant requise, la capacité d'être une promesse qui est tenue, tant la question de Dieu est question pratique, en tant que combat contre la violence et contre l'illusion. Il faut oser le dire : la passion et la patience de la raison relèvent aussi de la foi en Celui qui est Saint, dans une trajectoire qui va de la non-violence à la charité, et de la lutte contre l'illusion à l'espérance fondée, car nous n'avons pas le droit de tromper nos contemporains sur l'espérance.

2.3. Personne et liberté religieuse.

Sur ce point, beaucoup de débats ont déjà eu lieu, au sein même de l'Eglise catholique, il y a maintenant cinquante ans, de sorte qu'il suffit de citer quelques textes importants du Concile Vatican II, dans sa Déclaration sur la liberté religieuse, *Dignitatis humanae*. Un paragraphe suffira, le § 2, qui décrit ainsi l'objet et le fondement de la liberté religieuse.

> *Ce Concile du Vatican déclare que la personne humaine a droit à la liberté religieuse. Cette liberté consiste en ce que tous les hommes doivent être exempts de toute contrainte de la part tant des individus que des groupes sociaux et de quelque pouvoir humain que ce soit, de telle sorte qu'en matière religieuse nul ne soit forcé d'agir contre sa conscience ni empêché d'agir, dans de justes limites, selon sa conscience, en privé comme en public, seul ou associé à d'autres. Il déclare, en outre, que le droit à la liberté religieuse a son fondement réel dans la dignité même de la personne humaine telle que l'ont fait connaître la Parole de Dieu et la raison elle-même.*[4] *Ce droit de la personne humaine à la liberté religieuse dans l'ordre juridique de la société doit être reconnu de telle manière qu'il constitue un droit civil.*
>
> *En vertu de leur dignité, tous les hommes, parce qu'ils sont des personnes, c'est-à-dire doués de raison et de volonté libre, et, par suite, pourvus d'une respon-*

[4] Jean XXIII, Encyclique *Pacem in terris*, 11 avril 1963 : *AAS* 55 (1963), p. 260-261. – Pie XII, Message radiophonique, 24 décembre 1942 : *AAS* 35 (1943), p. 19. – Pie XI, Encyclique *Mit brennender Sorge*, 14 mai 1937 : *AAS* 29 (1937), p. 160. – Léon XIII, Encyclique *Libertas praestantissimum*, 20 juin 1888 : Acta Leonis XIII, 8 (1888), p. 237-238.

sabilité personnelle, sont pressés, par leur nature même, et tenus, par obligation morale, à chercher la vérité, celle tout d'abord qui concerne la religion. Ils sont tenus aussi à adhérer à la vérité dès qu'ils la connaissent et à régler toute leur vie selon les exigences de cette vérité. Or, à cette obligation, les hommes ne peuvent satisfaire, d'une manière conforme à leur propre nature, que s'ils jouissent, outre de la liberté psychologique, de l'exemption de toute contrainte extérieure. Ce n'est donc pas sur une disposition subjective de la personne, mais sur sa nature même, qu'est fondé le droit à la liberté religieuse. C'est pourquoi le droit à cette exemption de toute contrainte persiste en ceux-là mêmes qui ne satisfont pas à l'obligation de chercher la vérité et d'y adhérer ; son exercice ne peut être entravé, dès lors que demeure sauf un ordre public juste.

Point n'est besoin d'ajouter autre chose : de nombreux discours du Bienheureux Pape Jean-Paul II ont souligné que si ce droit-là, qui fait appel à la plus haute dignité de l'être humain, n'est pas respecté, tous les autres droits de la personne humaine sont en péril.

3. Selon le cœur de Dieu, chaque personne est unique et toutes sont solidaires.

« Les conditions de la chose font partie de la chose », nous enseignent aussi bien les philosophes que le sens pratique. L'autre condition requise par le développement des personnes, après la liberté, est la justice. Chacun, chacune de nous est unique, mais tous sont appelés à être solidaires.

3.1. Unicité de la personne et fraternité

Dieu ne fait pas acception de personnes : dans le Fils il nous adopte comme ses enfants. Ce n'est pas rien de pouvoir nommer Dieu *notre Père* : non seulement reconnaître qu'il est Père, ce qui nous interdit de confondre Dieu et notre mauvaise conscience, mais accepter cette *filiation* où nous somme aimés chacun/chacune pour nous-mêmes. La détermination ultime qui définit tout être humain n'est pas ceci ou cela, mais, de toute éternité, le fait que chacun/chacune de nous a un nom unique, un nom propre, dans le cœur de Dieu.

Une telle approche si on la prend au sérieux change radicalement la situation. La philosophie grecque, à partir de Socrate, marquait l'émergence du sujet dans une culture qui jusque-là ressemblait à toutes les cultures traditionnelles, où le vrai sujet de l'histoire est le clan, la lignée, ou la cité. Le génie romain quant à lui a élaboré un droit des personnes tout à fait remarquable. Mais la société gréco-romaine était fondamentalement inégalitaire, car être une « personne » était d'abord un

statut réservé au propriétaire et chef de lignée. Tandis qu'au contraire la foi chrétienne considère qu'il y a une égalité foncière, constitutive, entre toutes les personnes, devant Dieu. La tradition chrétienne introduit un principe critique à l'intérieur de toute société qu'elle évangélise, fût-elle féodale et hiérarchique, ou démocratique mais inégalitaire.

Corrélativement, chacun/chacune de nous n'advient à sa personnalité qu'en relation…

Le rapport de filiation avec Dieu induit aussitôt une *fraternité*, à vivre dans la confiance en Dieu : la joie de la communion dans la différence maintenue. C'est aussi cela qui donne la promesse pour chaque personne d'une fécondité réelle. En effet, quand Dieu crée, en manifestant ainsi l'étonnante fécondité concrète de l'Amour, c'est pour se réjouir d'une autre communion dans la différence maintenue, comme en sa vie interne trinitaire, mais cette fois avec un être de nature différente : la création, dont l'homme est la pointe. Notre foi en Dieu Créateur et au Verbe fait chair nous ramène sans cesse à la réalité charnelle et à nos responsabilités envers le partage et la protection de la vie : la lutte contre la faim, pour la santé, l'écologie, la justice, la paix, en commençant par le soin que nous avons à prendre du prochain le plus proche.

3.2. Personne et communauté

Sur ce point, pour faire bref, nous pouvons citer une fois encore le Concile Vatican II, qui au § 25 de *Gaudium et Spes*, redit la prééminence de la personne sur la communauté humaine :

En effet la personne humaine, qui, de par sa nature même, a absolument besoin d'une vie sociale, est et doit être le principe, le sujet et la fin de toutes les institutions. La vie sociale n'est donc pas pour l'homme quelque chose de surajouté : aussi c'est par l'échange avec autrui, par la réciprocité des services, par le dialogue avec ses frères que l'homme grandit selon toutes ses capacités et peut répondre à sa vocation.

Cela débouche immédiatement sur les exigences de justice, au nom même de la dignité de la personne humaine, comme le précise le § 26 :

Mais en même temps grandit la conscience de l'éminente dignité de la personne humaine, supérieure à toutes choses et dont les droits et les devoirs sont universels et inviolables. Il faut donc rendre accessible à l'homme tout ce dont il a besoin pour mener une vie vraiment humaine, par exemple : nourriture, vêtement, habitat, droit de choisir librement son état de vie et de fonder une famille, droit à l'éducation, au travail, à la réputation, au respect, à une information convenable, droit d'agir selon la droite règle de sa conscience, droit à la sauvegarde de la vie privée et à une juste liberté, y compris en matière religieuse.

Aussi l'ordre social et son progrès doivent-ils toujours tourner au bien des personnes, puisque l'ordre des choses doit être subordonné à l'ordre des personnes et non l'inverse. Le Seigneur lui-même le suggère lorsqu'il a dit : « Le sabbat a été fait pour l'homme et non l'homme pour le sabbat» (Mc 2, 27). Cet ordre doit sans cesse se développer, avoir pour base la vérité, s'édifier sur la justice, et être vivifié par l'amour ; il doit trouver dans la liberté un équilibre toujours plus humain[5]. *Pour y parvenir, il faut travailler au renouvellement des mentalités et entreprendre de vastes transformations sociales.*

Ainsi, selon la foi chrétienne, chaque personne est unique et toutes sont solidaires. Face à ce grandiose dessein de Dieu, les forces contraires ne manquent pas. La culture occidentale, qui a été chrétienne, permet à tous les citoyens, croyants ou non, de partager les valeurs de la personne. Mais quand elle se coupe de ses racines, on constate le retour massif d'un individualisme préoccupant. L'individu n'est pas la personne. L'individu s'isole, ne compte que sur lui, veut maîtriser les différences et ce qui lui échappe, autrui, l'avenir, au risque de toutes les violences et de toutes les illusions. Il se comporte en propriétaire de la vie, alors que celle-ci ne réjouit le cœur qu'en étant partagée. Il n'est plus solidaire, il devient solitaire. C'est pourquoi dans un monde de solitude et de massification le témoignage des croyants est précieux. Quand nous parlons à partir de nos fois différentes, chrétiens et musulmans, en un Dieu qui est, nous le confessons tous, le Dieu unique, il nous faudrait, pour donner corps à nos idées et purifier les uns et les autres nos représentations, revenir à la pratique, où nous avons à refuser ensemble toute violence et toute illusion. Positivement, cela revient à vouloir échanger sur la manière dont, au quotidien, nous pouvons et voulons envisager autrui et l'avenir : c'est là que Dieu nous attend, et c'est là que l'homme sera plus grand. Devant le Dieu Unique toujours plus grand, la tâche demeure, dans le dialogue interreligieux, de repérer les différences qui sont fécondes et non pas séparatrices, et de bâtir des ponts plutôt que des murs. Plus Dieu est grand, plus nous devons être solidaires.

Conclusion

Comment, alors que nous sommes réunis sur le lieu présumé du Baptême du Christ, ne pas terminer en faisant allusion au baptême : il s'agit toujours pour la personne, dans la mise en œuvre de son intelligence et de sa foi, de sortir d'une

[5] Cf. Jean XXIII, Encyclique *Pacem in terris* : AAS 55 (1963), p. 266.

terre d'esclavage en marchant vers l'inconnu qui nous attend, sur la seule foi de la promesse ; il s'agit de traverser l'épreuve pour ressurgir en vue du monde à venir, en anticipant le Royaume de Dieu par la réconciliation de la communauté humaine en attente de Dieu. Sur ce chemin, chrétiens et musulmans, nous ne manquons ni d'horizon, ni de souffle. Que Dieu bénisse nos efforts pour nous comprendre et Le servir en servant la paix...

RAISON, FOI ET PERSONNE.
PERSPECTIVE CHRETIENNE ET MUSULMANE*

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Baptism Site of Jesus Christ, Jordan, 21-23 November 2011

'La personne humaine à la lumière de la raison': tel est le thème qui m'a été imparti pour la présente rencontre sur le dialogue entre chrétiens et musulmans dans le contexte du Forum Catholique -Musulman. D'autres contributions examineront aussi le rapport entre raison et foi avec une attention spéciale à la personne humaine.

Situation de la personne. La redécouverte de la personne est aujourd'hui facilitée, mais aussi défiée, par la technique, l'évolutionnisme, les biotechnologies, les grands problèmes émergents de la politique et de l'éthique. Ce serait cependant faire un faux pas que d'articuler la détermination de la personne dans la perspective de l'avantage qui ressortirait ou non de ces nouveaux thèmes et défis. Nous n'avons pas besoin de thèses préfabriquées, mais de reprendre en main la question sur la personne dans toute son ampleur et sans buts apologétiques : cela peut se faire si la radicalité du mode de penser parvient à un niveau fondateur ultime.

Depuis plusieurs lustres, c'est l'attention à la 'question anthropologique' qui s'est imposée avec son cortège de questions habituelles publiques qui, en prenant le nom de 'question institutionnelle démocratique' et 'question sociale', ont donné le ton, du moins en Occident, à deux siècles d'histoire. Par rapport à ces problématiques, la question anthropologique présente des caractéristiques plus radicales et toujours plus aigües. L'être humain est remis en question aussi bien au niveau biologique et corporel qu'au niveau de la conscience qu'il a de lui-même. Les neurosciences et les technologies de la vie pèsent sur le sujet, le transforment, tendent à opérer un changement dans le mode d'appréhender les notions centrales de l'expérience de chacun : être engendré ou bien produit, naître, vivre, procréer, travailler, chercher la santé, vieillir, mourir. Il s'agit là des transformations de noyaux très sensibles qui ont intéressé des milliers de générations et qui constituent le tissu fondamental de l'expérience humaine de tous lieux et temps. Le rapport entre Personne et Technique constitue un des thèmes les plus complexes de notre époque.

La commune raison comme fondement de tout dialogue, y compris le dialogue interreligieux. Dans l'exploration du problème de la personne à la lumière de la raison, il est un premier pas à accomplir : celui de faire confiance à la raison humaine qui tous nous unit et de l'assumer comme fondement du dialogue philosophique et interreligieux. Un tel fondement est aussi celui de notre commune humanité, marquée par la possession-connaissance universelle de cette faculté typiquement humaine que nous appelons raison ou intellect. Chercher la vérité sur la personne est nécessaire à chacun de nous et à l'authenticité des religions elles-mêmes.

Pour avancer dans la compréhension de la personne, nous avons besoin de recourir non seulement aux sciences qui, en vérité, risquent de fragmenter en mille angles de visuelle l'unité de l'être humain, mais aussi, spécialement, au langage fondamental de la raison et de la philosophie, c'est-à-dire à l'ontologie et à l'éthique.

La référence à la raison, ici développée, est une direction de recherche qui n'entend certes pas nier *la synergie et le cercle vertueux entre raison et foi.* Ces noyaux, nouvellement développés dans l'encyclique *Fides et ratio* de Jean-Paul II (1998), évoquent un point central de la tradition théologique et philosophique du christianisme qu'il n'est pas superflu de rappeler ici. Au cours de son histoire, en effet, le christianisme a davantage été marqué par le dialogue avec les philosophies que par le dialogue avec les autres religions, ce dernier étant un évènement relativement récent.[1]

Dans le processus d'introduction du concept de personne dans l'histoire du monde, nous rencontrons justement la coopération entre foi et raison. La 'découverte' de la personne a été favorisée par la Révélation du christianisme qui parachevé des intuitions déjà présentes, d'une certaine manière, dans le judaïsme biblique et dans la pensée grecque : chez ces derniers on rencontre des caractères de l'être humain qui pré-annoncent sa qualité de personne, tels que la raison, le langage, la spiritualité, l'intelligence, l'ouverture à la transcendance. En effet, entre le IV et le V siècle apr. J.C., un extraordinaire débat et approfondissement des vérités centrales du christianisme s'est ouvert dans l'œcoumène chrétienne : a) l'unité de la substance divine distincte en trois Personnes (Père, Fils, Saint Esprit) selon les relations internes à l'unique substance ; b) l'existence dans le Verbe Incarné d'une seule Personne (celle du Fils) et de deux natures (divine et humaine).[2]

[1] Sur foi et raison, cf. ma contribution au colloque catholique-musulman de Rome intitulé : *Foi et raison: quelle relation? Un point de vue chrétien* (Rome, 28-30 avril 2008).

[2] Cf. les Conciles œcuméniques fondamentaux de l'Église (Nicée, 325 apr. J.C., Constantinople, 381, Calcédoine, 451).

Ce débat fondamental, où Écriture et philosophie se sont rencontrées, a conduit à l'élaboration du concept de personne, offert pour ainsi dire à la raison comme un gain dont elle a le droit de jouir à son propre niveau, mais qu'il aurait été long et difficile d'obtenir sans le concours de la Révélation. C'est ainsi qu'étaient posées les conditions fondamentales pour la naissance de ce qui, beaucoup plus tard, s'appellera le *personnalisme* et qui, puisqu'il concerne la réalité universelle de la personne, apparaît non seulement comme une école de pensée issue de la philosophie occidentale mais aussi comme l'expression d'une anthropologie universelle.

Il ne fait pas de doute que le personnalisme, comme ensemble d'écoles et de philosophies, assigne à la personne une dignité et une valeur spéciale, mais il ne s'agit pas, au sens stricte, d'une invention du XIX s. mais, originairement, de celle de la Patristique, du Moyen-âge chrétien et de l'humanisme : c'est ici qu'on été élaborées - et pour toujours - les idées fondamentales sur la personne dans leur espace de réalité. Et s'il est vrai que le personnalisme du XIX s. ampute quelques fois cette grandiose tradition, d'autre part, il faut bien reconnaître qu'il l'enrichit beaucoup du point de vue des droits humains, des intuitions sur la justice et l'égalité humaine, de la valeur de la vie commune, du fait que la dignité inhérente à chaque personne doit être défendue effectivement au profit de tous. Les personnalistes ont réagi à la dépersonnalisation de l'homme se manifestant par divers chemins et qui conduit à l'abolition de l'homme, comme le décrivait Roberto Musil dans *L'homme sans qualité*.[3]

Qu'est-ce que la personne humaine ? Celui qui a introduit clairement en philosophie l'idée de personne comme concept de la raison, sans se priver des approfondissements théologiques déjà évoqués, fut Manlio Torquato Severino Boezio (480-524 apr. J.C.), romain et chrétien. Selon Boezio – Boèce, en français – la personne est une substance individuelle de par sa nature spirituelle (*persona est rationalis naturae individua substantia*), et c'est véritablement pour cela qu'elle possède

[3] En philosophie, le XXème siècle a été le siècle du personnalisme dans lequel les coryphées de la personne ont été nombreux et profonds. Une liste, bien qu'incomplète, inclut les noms de Max Scheler, de Jacques Maritain, d'Edith Stein, de Dietrich von Hildebrand, de Paul Landsberg, d'Adolf Reinach, d'Emmanuel Mounier, de Gabriel Marcel, de Romano Guardini, de Paul Ricoeur, d'Emmanuel Lévinas, de Vladimir Soloviev, de Karol Wojtyla, de Robert Spaemann, de Martin Buber. Aujourd'hui, le personnalisme égalitaire, avec son cortège de droits humains qui appartiennent à la personne, constitue la base solide pour l'édification d'un cosmopolitisme politique : ce personnalisme laisse la place à l'idée que les unités fondamentales d'importance ontologique, morale et politique, sont les personnes, porteuses d'une égale valeur et d'une égale dignité, et non pas les États ou autres formes d'association humaine.

une dignité particulière. Les grands docteurs du Moyen-Age chrétien développèrent de manière homogène le travail accompli par Boèce et les Pères de l'Église. Il va de soi qu'ici, la référence est celle de l'élaboration de saint Thomas d'Aquin pour qui « personne » signifie ce qui existe de plus parfait dans tout l'univers, c'est-à-dire un sujet que subsiste dans une nature spirituelle (*persona significat id quod est perfectissimum in tota natura, scilicet subsistens in rationali natura*).[4] Chez aucun autre individu il est possible de retrouver une gamme aussi riche de perfections ontologiques agissantes et une unité plus profonde. Cette perfection ontologique fait de la personne un prédicat de valeur, c'est-à-dire quelque chose qui a valeur en soi, qui a dignité et mérite respect. À travers les débats théologiques et l'analogie entre créature et Créateur, le terme « personne » reçoit une connotation de dignité parfois moins immédiate dans le terme « homme » ou « individu humain ».

Compte tenu des conclusions de Boèce, il est facile de vérifier que les quatre concepts constitutifs de la personne : *individu, substance, nature* et *raison* sont des termes à la portée de la raison humaine, non révélés, et longuement élaborés par la pensée philosophique, à commencer par les Grecs, même si ceux-ci ne parvinrent pas à les synthétiser dans le concept de personne. À ce propos, nous rencontrons un paradoxe : un tel concept se serait développé avec davantage de difficulté sans la Révélation mais, d'autre part, il s'agit d'une réalité qui appartient à la raison humaine. Pour ainsi dire, la Révélation donne une impulsion à la raison parce qu'elle devient plus profondément elle-même[5] [des éléments ultérieurs sur le concept de personne et sur le caractère de l'embryon humain se trouvent en Annexe I et II – en italien].

Substantialité, valeur ultime et dignité de la personne. La personne est douée d'autonomie, c'est-à-dire cette capacité de s'unifier de l'intérieur, de s'ouvrir à l'autre, de liberté : elle est surtout une *substantialité* spirituelle ou un moi qui possède une consistance propre et qui *ne peut se résoudre uniquement dans la seule relation sociale* ni dans le seul cycle de la matière. Tout cela conduit à l'idée que la personne humaine est une *fin en soi* et non un moyen pour quelque chose d'autre. Thomas d'Aquin écrivait que les substances intellectuelles (personnes) sont voulues pour elles-mêmes par Dieu dans l'univers.[6]

La position est claire : *c'est la nature même des personnes qui en fait des fins en soi* et des êtres doués de dignité. Ce caractère n'est pas une assertion indépendan-

[4] *Summa Theologiae*, I, q. 29, a.3.

[5] Pour une approche ample du concept de personne, cf. V. Possenti, *Il Principio-Persona*, Armando, Roma 2006. Quelques annotations supplémentaires se trouvent en Annexe I.

[6] Cf. *Contra Gentes*, l. III, c. 112.

te mais il jaillit de la nature raisonnable de la personne, sans laquelle elle ne serait pas.[7] La personne est une fin parce qu'elle est un être spirituel doué d'immortalité, crée à l'image et à la ressemblance de Dieu, revêtu de dignité et méritant un respect inconditionnel.[8] Avec cela, nous entrons dans le domaine de l'étique, de la cohabitation sociale, de la politique, des droits et des devoirs humains.

Pour la personne, l'individu prévaut sur le genre : il s'agit de *quelqu'un* et non de *quelque chose* et, comme tel, il existe de manière absolue face à l'Absolu. En étant la seule créature de l'univers voulue pour elle-même et non pour autre chose, la personne est d'emblée un microcosme, une image finie et inachevée de l'Infini, donc, infiniment multipliable sans risque de duplications et des répétitions.

Eh bien, si l'humanisme est connoté du principe de dignité de la personne, les antihumanistes se caractérisent vraiment par la critique et la dissolution de la personne. On peut ainsi parler d'une « mort de l'homme », après celle de Dieu : une forme de « mort de l'homme », après celle de Dieu, consiste actuellement à tenter d'abattre la frontière entre homme et animal, et de faire du premier un pur animal, simplement un peu plus développé.

La personne, le bien, la loi morale naturelle. Parmi les fondements rationnels de la personne, il existe l'idée que l'être humain, puisque doué d'intellect et de volonté, est capable de connaître le bien et le mal en vertu de la raison pratique et de la présence en lui de la *loi morale naturelle*. Déjà, les penseurs grecs observaient que la société humaine est différente de celle des animaux, puisque seul l'homme s'interroge incessamment sur le bien et le mal. La moralité est une caractéristique unique des êtres humains, elle n'appartient qu'à eux.

Dans chaque être humain se trouve un appel de la loi morale qui n'est autre que la participation à l'unique loi éternelle divine présente dans l'être humain. Une telle loi universelle est le fondement d'une étique commune appartenant au grand patrimoine de la sagesse humaine. La vie morale a comme axe la soif et l'obéissance envers Dieu, source et juge de tout bien, mais aspire aussi au sens de l'autre comme un l'égal à soi-même. Le Décalogue est l'expression de la loi morale naturelle.

La loi dont parle l'expression « loi naturelle » n'est pas une loi de la nature physique (*physis*) telle que la gravitation, mais une loi morale inscrite dans la nature humaine. De manière analogue, la nature dont parle le « droit naturel » n'est pas

[7] Kant exprime ce concept en conjuguant le temps de l'impératif: assume toujours come fin et jamais comme moyen (cf. *Fondement de la métaphysique et des coutumes*).

[8] La recherche de la structure ontologique fondamentale de la personne fait partie de la doctrine, ou métaphysique, de même que l'enquête sur l'immortalité de l'âme comme faîte de celle de la raison humaine, un thème qui, comme l'on sait, est assez négligé par la pensée contemporaine.

la nature-biosphère qui nous entoure, mais la nature humaine ; et puisqu'une telle nature est rationnelle, le droit naturel est un droit rationnel.

La Philosophie morale, ou l'Ethique, enquête sur l'expérience morale comme élément universel, sous ses différents aspects, sans pour autant la créer.

La voix de la conscience. La dimension éthique de la personne a son centre dans la conscience morale qui représente la plus immédiate manifestation de l'humain. Dans la conscience de chacun s'exprime la qualité de son rapport individuel au bien et au mal : sentinelles constantes auxquelles la conscience, quel que soit son degré de développement, doit rendre compte. Il s'agit d'une présence constitutive sans laquelle la conscience ne serait pas. Son appel le plus radical et originaire, qui concerne chaque homme en tant qu'homme et qui établit un universel qui dépasse les appartenances religieuses, les traditions et les philosophies, se manifeste par « cette petite voix » qui dit à chaque personne : tu fais le bien parce que c'est bien ; évite le mal parce que c'est mal. Sur ce plan, la conscience décide. Elle choisit une action parce qu'elle la retient bonne et en délaisse une autre parce qu'elle la considère mauvaise. La responsabilité par rapport au Bien s'exprime dans la conscience morale: à l'abri des passions, elle permet au bien de voir le jour et nous pouvons alors comprendre quelque chose.

Dès lors, cette « voix de la conscience » soulève une question : mais qui appelle vraiment par cette voix qui invite à faire ou à ne pas faire ? La voix de la conscience se situe dans une dialectique entre une voix qui appelle et le moi qui est appelé, c'est-à-dire entre deux instances qui diffèrent. À partir de là, si la conscience est structurée comme une capacité d'écoute de quelque chose - ou de quelqu'un - qui ne s'identifie pas avec la conscience elle-même et comme ouverture à une voix qui suggère, voire même, commande, nous sommes alors renvoyés à un *Parlant* et à une *Loi* qui agissent au plus intime de la personne. Cette voix se présente surtout comme une voix de prohibition (Ne fais pas le mal !) ou comme une voix d'injonction (Fais le bien !) ; elle ne provient pas seulement de cet autre en face de moi mais elle me lancent un appel. Dans la conscience, il existe une voix qui vient d'ailleurs par rapport au monde et dont la philosophie peut connaître quelque chose.

Au-delà de cette reconnaissance, les modalités de connaissance de la conscience et son éducation ne sont pas sans varier. Dans ce domaine, la position actuelle selon laquelle la morale est comprise comme un processus naturaliste et évolutionniste où subsistent des points de non retour et des absolus moraux, a une influence non positive : le « devenirisme » est un frère du relativisme et rend beaucoup plus difficile de trouver des valeurs stables là où tout évolue. À cet élément général de difficulté, il faut ajouter d'autres facteurs, tels que : a) la dissociation scientifique de la personne en mille aspects qui précarisent son éducation compri-

se, elle, comme phénomène essentiellement unifiant ; b) le postulat de l'autonomie et des auto-législation de la raison morale d'un individu isolé qui repose sur lui-même ; c) la difficulté de trouver des lieux d'éducation aux valeurs morales : une telle éducation ne peut pas venir de l'État qui, au contraire, dépend largement des comportements et des vertus qu'il n'est pas en mesure de créer sur la base de ses propres ressources.

La nature humaine est-elle normative ? Du concept de nature (humaine) comme ce qui est accompli par son développement (« la nature est la fin : par exemple ce qu'est chaque chose lorsqu'elle a accompli son développement, nous disons sa nature, tant d'un homme que d'un cheval ou d'une maison », Politique, 1252 b31s) provient l'idée que dans la nature humaine même se trouvent des fins et donc des choses à vouloir, à désirer et à opérer, et d'autres, contraires. La nature humaine se manifeste comme normative, c'est-à-dire porteuse d'inclinations et de règles qui balisent son chemin et son action. Libertarisme et naturalisme nient la normativité présente dans la notion de nature humaine : le premier retient que la nature humaine soit exclusivement liberté, une autodétermination non sujette à quelque limitation que ce soit et que, donc, le caractère normatif de l'être humain s'exprime dans l'impératif « Sois libre ! »; le naturalisme pense que l'unique « normativité » soit celle inscrite dans les nécessités naturelles ; mais nous ne sommes plus alors dans le domaine normatif-étique. Mais si la nature/physis ne peut pas constituer la base d'une éthique et des liens moraux, la nature humaine le peut. En effet, nous vérifions qu'il existe beaucoup de biens qui nous attirent et, en méditant, nous trouvons que certains résultent pour chaque homme plus importants et fondamentaux que d'autres. Nous comprenons que certains sont essentiels pour la poursuite de la vie physique et que d'autres sont importants pour notre développement comme sujets humains, comme personnes. Nous comprenons qu'il existe des fins meilleures que d'autres (chercher à connaître est mieux que passer sa vie à ne rien faire) et enfin que, dans la nature humaine, sont inscrites des fins fondamentales pour elles. Rayer chaque *telos* de la nature humaine est une erreur et fait reposer tout projet moral sur des bases friables.

La dignité de chaque personne humaine, exprimée par des droits et des devoirs. La dignité de la personne et sa valeur de fin restent des mots vides s'ils ne se comprennent pas comme quelque chose de dû à la personne en tant que telle : ce sont là des droits primaires qui ne sont pas fondés dans l'arbitraire de l'humain mais qui jaillissent de la racine première constitutive de la *loi morale naturelle*.

L'Église catholique reconnaît que la Déclaration universelle des droits humains de 1948 constitue une pierre milliaire dans le cours de l'humanité et

qu'elle représente dans la civilisation contemporaine et dans l'état moderne le fondement commun du « vivre ensemble ». En même temps, elle soutient que les principaux droits correspondent aux inclinations humaines essentielles déposées par le Créateur dans notre nature. L'ordre selon lequel ces droits humains sont disposés dans l'encyclique *Centesimus Annus* (Jean-Paul II, 1991) rappelle les inclinations et les préceptes fondamentaux de la loi naturelle comme saint Thomas d'Aquin les a exposés dans le traité *Sur la loi* de la Somme de théologie (*Summa Theologiae*). Puisque ces inclinations sont : persistance de l'être ; union de l'homme et de la femme et conséquente génération et éducation de la progéniture ; vivre en société ; connaître la vérité, spécifiquement sur l'Absolu ; des droits spécifiques y correspondent selon le même ordre : le droit à la vie[9] ; à fonder une famille, à procréer et à éduquer les enfants ; à vivre en société et une tâche utile ; à mûrir dans sa propre intelligence dans la recherche de la vérité, spécialement sur Dieu. C'est là qu'il faut inscrire la très haute valeur de la liberté religieuse qui, puisqu'elle concerne le comportement de la personne face à l'Absolu, peut être considérée la récapitulation de tout autre droit. Mais cette même loi naturelle qui reconnaît à la personne ses droits lui impose aussi des devoirs : point de droits s'ils ne sont accompagnés de devoirs.[10]

L'universalité des droits jaillit de l'idée que la nature humaine est partout la même : les principaux droits demeurent en elle et ne sont pas une invention occidentale - comme on disait dans les années 1980-1990. L'universalité de la nature humaine ne mue pas à travers le temps et les cultures, elle demeure reconnaissable en vertu d'une série d'actes qui se manifestent partout : élaborer des concepts, choisir parmi diverses possibilités d'action, créer l'art, la philosophie, la science, la musique, être sensible à l'idée de ce qui est juste et injuste, etc. La notion de droit humain n'a un sens que si l'on s'accorde à l'existence d'une nature humaine universelle qui peut être connue à travers l'expérience et le raisonnement.

Droits et devoirs ne sont pas seulement un fait juridique mais sont aussi un fait moral et anthropologique ; ils obligent en conscience, non seulement parce qu'ils sont des statuts de la loi positive mais aussi parce qu'ils s'enracinent dans le bien : on pourrait dire que les droits humains sont anthropologiques mais non politiques.

[9] Sur le droit à la vie de l'embryon et son statut ontologique, cf. Annexe II (en italien).

[10] La vraie philosophie des droits de la personne humaine repose donc sur l'idée de la loi naturelle. La même loi naturelle qui nous prescrit nos devoirs les plus fondamentaux, et vertu de laquelle toute loi oblige, c'est elle aussi qui nous assigne nos droits fondamentaux », Jacques Maritain, *Les droits de l'homme et la loi naturelle*, p. 661, Éditions Saint Paul, Paris, 1988.

Conclusions. Le dialogue interreligieux porte sur Dieu et sur l'homme. Il porte sur l'amour de Dieu (amour de Dieu vers l'homme et amour de l'homme vers Dieu) et sur le statut concret de la personne avec ses droits et ses devoirs. L'irruption dans la culture de l'idée de personne a représenté un nouveau départ, tant dans l'histoire de la philosophie que dans l'histoire universelle. Cette idée dévoilera sa plus grande fécondité lorsqu'elle s'étendra au monde entier, bien au-delà du monde historique et culturel dans lequel elle a pris son essor et où aujourd'hui elle plonge de manière ses racines premières.

IL RISVEGLIO DI DIO

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Bisogna essere ciechi per non vedere un fenomeno che, cresciuto negli ultimi decenni forse un po' in disordine, sta diventando una delle novità salienti del nuovo millennio: il ritorno della religione sulla scena pubblica[1]. Per lungo tempo confinata nell'ambito privato della coscienza si era pensato che questo sarebbe stato l'inizio del suo declino. I sociologi degli anni Sessanta del secolo scorso parlavano di "eclisse del sacro", e si pensava che mai più esso sarebbe tornato alla ribalta. Così non è stato. E l'eclisse si è rivelata per quella che astronomicamente è: un temporaneo oscuramento. Dio, insomma, non era morto: si era soltanto addormentato ed ora assistiamo con stupore al suo vigoroso risveglio. Ciò che infatti sta sotto gli occhi di tutti è il riemergere prepotente della religione, dal *forum internum* della coscienza, dal privato in cui era stata confinata, e questo anche in società come le nostre che sino a poco tempo fa si ritenevano ampiamente secolarizzate. L'Europa continentale può ormai essere definita una società post-secolare, poiché in essa la religione nelle diverse forme in cui essa storicamente si manifesta, avanza nuovamente la pretesa di valere come forza sociale vincolante, chiudendo in tal modo l'epoca della sua neutralizzazione pubblica.

Molteplici sono le ragioni di questa rinascita della religione anche laddove veniva considerata ormai in via di estinzione. In questo mio intervento, richiamerò velocemente l'attenzione su tre aspetti, evidenziando la sfida che questo fenomeno ci lancia e come si è cercato di rispondere ad esso.

I

Comincio con un aspetto che forse è quello decisivo, anche se nell'analisi degli osservatori – con l'eccezione di Jürgen Habermas, che a partire da *Glauben*

[1] Mi limiterò qui ad indicare tra i libri essenziali: G. Kepel, *La revanche de Dieu. Chrétiens, juifs et musulmans a la reconquête du monde*, Paris, Seuil, 1991; trad. it. di C. Torre, *La rivincita di Dio*, Milano, Rizzoli, 1991; J. Casanova, *Public Religions in the Modern World*, Chicago-London, 1994; trad. it. *Oltre la secolarizzazione. Le religioni alla riconquista della sfera pubblica*, Bologna, Il Mulino, 2000; F. W. Graf, *Die Wiederkehr der Götter: Religion in der modernen Kultur*, München, Beck, 2004. Illuminante l'editoriale di C. Galli e S. Mezzadra, *Oltre la teologia politica: religione, potere, identità*, in «Filosofia politica», XXIV, 3, dicembre 2010, pp. 365-371. In poche densissime pagine gli autori mettono a fuoco l'argomento che è oggi al centro del dibattito.

und Wissen (un discorso da lui tenuto nel 2001 nella Paulskirche di Francoforte) ha continuato ad insistervi[2] - è rimasto piuttosto sullo sfondo. Di fronte ad una ragione sempre più strumentale e assoggettata al dominio della tecnoscienza la religione si presenta come un grosso serbatoio di senso, non ancora esaurito. La secolarizzazione con il suo disincantamento (*Entzauberung*) ha provocato il dissolvimento dell'immagine religiosa del mondo, la sua sdivinizzazione (*Entgötterung*), ma il risultato – oggi palpabile – è stato un inaridimento di senso. I nostri cervelli e i nostri corpi sono ormai colonizzati dalle macchine (il portatile è finito dalla scrivania nella camera da letto e ormai non si chiudono più gli occhi prima di aver guardato sul Blackberry le ultime mail), contaminazioni fra l'organico e l'inorganico, tra il naturale e l'artificiale, tra l'umano e il non umano, lasciano già intravvedere l'orizzonte del postumano. Siamo tutti in rete, ma anche tutti intrappolati nella rete. Video sempre accesi e schermi onnipresenti. Persino la crisi economica attuale è stata paragonata ad un videogame in cui appena è stato sconfitto un mostro ne ricompare subito un altro. E così il gioco può continuare all'infinito.

L'effetto di tutto ciò è un vuoto di relazioni e una sempre più accentuata estraneazione dell'uomo dal mondo reale e dal senso della sua esistenza. Non c'è in fondo da stupirsi se Dio e la religione siano di nuovo evocati come possibili risposte all'attuale crisi nichilistica. Basti un esempio: di fronte alla "situazione limite" dell'eugenetica che mira alla creazione di una nuova stirpe postumana riaffiora il bisogno di ripensare la propria origine riconducendola ad un inizio indisponibile. Ma come soddisfare un tale bisogno se non rielaborando razionalmente contenuti di senso che ci provengono da rappresentazioni in ultima istanza religiose? Tornerò su questa domanda nella conclusione di questo intervento: qui basti intanto sottolineare come essa tocchi il nodo cruciale del rapporto tra fede e sapere.

II

Vorrei però richiamare l'attenzione su due ulteriori aspetti che riguardano un altro nodo fondamentale: quello tra religione e politica. La caduta del Muro di Berlino e la grave recessione economica mondiale hanno generato le condizioni storiche propizie per un ritorno della religione anche in Occidente, proprio laddo-

[2] La conferenza di Habermas pubblicata nel 2001 da Suhrkamp è apparsa in lingua italiana come Appendice al volume curato da L. Ceppa, J. Habermas, *Il futuro della natura umana. I rischi di una genetica liberale*, Torino, Einaudi, 2002, pp. 99-112. Tra gli scritti più recenti al riguardo, cfr. J. Habermas, *La rinascita della religione: una sfida per l'autocomprensione laica della modernità?* in *Religione e politica nella società post-secolare*, a cura di A. Ferrara, Roma, Meltemi, 2009, pp. 24-41.

ve sembrava ormai conservare una funzione meramente residuale. Crollata la fiducia nelle ideologie politiche dominanti nel secolo scorso con il collasso del "socialismo reale" e dopo il fallimento di un liberalismo del mercato che con la globalizzazione economica ha mostrato tutti i suoi limiti, la religione è tornata a rappresentare un punto di riferimento per uomini e donne sempre più disorientati da una società in crisi e incapace di uscirne. E qui va pur dato atto alla Chiesa Cattolica, proprio presentandosi nella veste comunitaristica e "antimoderna" di Papa Benedetto XVI[3], di aver saputo cogliere l'occasione meglio delle Chiese protestanti, almeno di quelle organizzate su base nazionale e maggiormente caratterizzate in senso individualistico.

Venuti meno il socialismo e il liberalismo non resta che affidarsi a qualcosa che è in fondo sopravvissuto ad entrambi: il cattolicesimo; è questa l'unica "riserva escatologica" rimasta sul mercato, capace, se non altro, di "frenare" i suoi effetti più devastanti. La Chiesa cattolica, in particolare, è così ritornata ad esercitare una importante funzione terapeutica: un punto fermo a cui aggrapparsi di fronte al crescente disagio sociale e all'incapacità di uscire dalle contraddizioni prodotte da un capitalismo ipertecnologico.

Ma anche la religione cattolica, pur essendo per sua stessa natura universale e transnazionale, non è più la religione dominante. Essa lo è ancora in Europa, ma l'Europa è ormai diventata un'entità fittizia, un pedone insignificante della scacchiera planetaria ed in più proprio in Europa – a seguito del massiccio fenomeno dell'immigrazione – il cristianesimo è chiamato; direi nella vita di tutti i giorni (costruzione di moschee e minareti, crocefisso nelle scuole, dieta alimentare negli asili, etc.), a confrontarsi con la religione di provenienza dei migranti che è in prevalenza musulmana. Non c'è più da tempo un'Europa dominante nel mondo, così come non c'è più una religione dominante, ed il fatto nuovo è che gli dei hanno ripreso a combattersi tra loro. E così passo a considerare il terzo aspetto.

Il "politeismo dei valori" che nella vulgata weberiana esprimeva il riconoscimento laico di una pluralità pacificata di visioni del mondo (tutte ugualmente legittime) mostra di nuovo il suo volto conflittuale. Chiamata a rispondere al crescente bisogno di identità, la religione non può soddisfarlo se non agganciandosi a quell' identità di cui è espressione e a cui al contempo vuol dare espressione. La rinascita prima in America e poi anche in Europa del sentimento religioso cristiano può anche – ma sicuramente non soltanto, come mostra la forte crescita nell'America Latina degli evangelici – essere spiegata come una risposta ai movi-

[3] Per una sintetica, lucida, presentazione, cfr. L. Scaraffia, *Joseph Ratzinger: un teologo che pensa a tutti*, in *Joseph Ratzinger - Opera Omnia. Invito alla lettura*, a cura di P. Azzaro, Città del Vaticano, Libreria Editrice Vaticana, 2010, pp. 53-83.

menti musulmani più radicali ed al potenziale di violenza che hanno già prodotto e continuano a produrre. Basti qui ricordare l'episodio più recente: la strage cristiana all'uscita di una delle più importanti Chiese di Alessandria d'Egitto nella notte di questo nuovo anno. Nel momento in cui da una parte l'Islam fondamentalista cerca di affermarsi sulla scena del mondo, è inevitabile che dall'altra parte si riscoprano le radici giudaico-cristiane.

C'è dunque il rischio che il mondo diventi il teatro di una nuova conflittualità interreligiosa? La radicalizzazione dello scontro fra concezioni totalizzanti incompatibili e inconciliabili va sicuramente in questa direzione, ed è un fatto che la distinzione politica per eccellenza, quella tra amico e nemico, passi nuovamente attraverso l'appartenenza confessionale. Come rispondere a questa sfida che porta con sé il ritorno della religione nell'arena politica? Non resta che prendere atto dello scontro tra civiltà (*clash of civilizations*[4]) e agire di conseguenza o è sufficiente rivitalizzare quel senso di laicità connesso all'idea di uno Stato equidistante e neutrale che sarebbe stato incrinato dal "ritorno di sacro"?

Le due soluzioni attualmente in discussione rispondono in modo affermativo o alla prima o alla seconda domanda. Ma entrambe si rivelano insoddisfacenti. Vediamo perché, prima di accennare ad una proposta alternativa.

III

1. La soluzione realista è quella che prende atto dell'insanabilità del conflitto e decide di ribattere colpo su colpo, *à la guerre comme à la guerre*, chiudendosi nella difesa della propria confessione religiosa e auspicando, dopo il "divorzio" della secolarizzazione, una "nuova alleanza" tra religione nazionale e potere politico, tra Chiesa e Stato.

L'esempio forse più eclatante può essere offerto dalla rivendicazione dell'esposizione del crocefisso nei luoghi pubblici come risposta alla richiesta sempre più pressante di costruire moschee e minareti. Ma altre misure vanno nella stessa direzione, come quelle che facilitano (se non subordinano) l'accesso al territorio a immigrati che professano la religione dominante in esso o attribuiscono particolari agevolazioni alle attività di tale religione (spazi privilegiati nell'istruzione, sovvenzioni, sgravi fiscali e così via). A venir meno sarebbe l'equidistanza dello Stato da tutte le confessioni religiose; lo Stato sarebbe invece chiamato ad accordarsi con quell'unica religione nazionale riconosciuta come fattore di coesione sociale.

[4] S. P. Huntington, *The Clash of Civilizations and the Remaking of World Order*, New York, Simon & Schester, 1996; trad. it. *Il conflitto delle civiltà e il nuovo ordine mondiale*, Milano, Garzanti, 2000.

Questa soluzione sembrerebbe far rivivere il sogno ottocentesco (antiliberale e antiindividualistico) di uno Stato cristiano. Sia ciò desiderabile o meno, essa presuppone l'esistenza di un *ethos* cristiano condiviso e di uno Stato capace di appropriarsene. Entrambe le condizioni oggi mancano. Lo Stato – nella forma in cui si è affermato nella modernità – sta tramontando: da soggetto che ha esercitato il controllo monopolistico della decisione politica è diventato esso stesso oggetto di decisioni prese in larga parte altrove. Anche l'idea di un mondo diviso in "grandi spazi", quale ultimo distillato della crisi dello *jus publicum Europaeum*, come preconizzava Carl Schmitt[5], è superata. La globalizzazione dei mercati e della tecniche esige un *unico* spazio: l'Impero invasivo e pervasivo del nuovo capitalismo immateriale, e tutti, indistintamente, siamo incapsulati in esso. Uscirne è impossibile.

D'altronde proprio in Europa risulta sempre più difficile parlare di un *ethos* cristiano condiviso. All'Europa dei burocrati e banchieri di Bruxelles gliene importa tanto poco della civiltà cristiana da aver imposto nel suo Trattato costitutivo l'esclusione delle radici giudaico-cristiane[6]. Inoltre, *nolens volens* il cristianesimo non può non confrontarsi con la religione musulmana di migranti, sempre più massicciamente presenti. La soluzione, insomma, non può essere crocefissi contro moschee e minareti e neppure laicità contro crocefisso e velo islamico, ma ampia libertà religiosa per tutti, e diritto alla sua libera espressione pubblica purché ciò non comporti odio, violenza e prevaricazione nei confronti di coloro che hanno convinzioni differenti. Insomma, quello che intendo sostenere è una sorta di "ammorbidimento" del laicismo. Spesso si tende a spiegare la "neutralità" dello Stato nei confronti della religione come un corollario della sua riduzione ad affare privato di coscienza; "neutralità" qui però significa qualcosa di più della mera

[5] Il testo di riferimento, nella vasta produzione di Schmitt sul tema, resta C. Schmitt, *Völkerrechtliche Großraumordnung mit Interventionsverbot für raumfremde Mächte. Ein Beitrag zum Reichsbegriff im Völkerrecht*, Berlin-Wien-Leipzig, Deutscher Rechtsverlag, 1941; trad.it. *Il concetto di impero nel diritto internazionale*, Roma, Settimo Sigillo, 1996. Si vedano, tuttavia, anche C. Schmitt, *Der völkerrechtliche Kampf um die Monroedoktrin* (1939); trad. it. *Grande spazio contro universalismo*, in C. Schmitt, *Posizioni e concetti. In lotta con Weimar-Ginevra-Versailles 1923-1939*, a cura di A. Caracciolo, Milano, Giuffrè, 2007, pp. 491-503; Id., *Beschleuniger wider Willen oder: Die Problematik der westlichen Hemisphäre* (1942); trad. it. *La lotta per i grandi spazi e l' illusione americana*, in C. Schmitt, *Scritti politico-giuridici (1933-1942). Antologia da «Lo Stato»*, a cura di A. Campi, Bacco&Arianna, Perugia, 1983, pp. 115-123. Sul tema cfr. R. Voigt, *Denken in Großräumen. Imperien, Großräume und Kernstaaten in der Weltordnung des 21. Jahrhunderts*, in R. Voigt (a cura di), *Großraum-Denken. Carl Schmitts Kategorie der Großraumordnung*, Stuttgart, Steiner, 2008, pp. 27-46.

[6] Chi con forza ha richiamato l'attenzione su questo punto è Ida Magli, la quale, però, contrappone all'Europa di Maastricht il ritorno puro e semplice agli Stati Nazionali, quando invece ci sarebbe, a mio avviso, bisogno di qualcosa di meglio di entrambi. Cfr. I. Magli, *La dittatura Europea*, Milano, Rizzoli, 2010.

indifferenza, è un concetto "esclusivo", perché lo Stato è tutt'altro che neutrale nel momento in cui la religiosità assume forme pubbliche (esempio: divieto di esposizione del crocefisso in luoghi pubblici, divieto di indossare il velo islamico). In questo modello lo Stato rivendica il monopolio della sfera pubblica e cerca di continuare a confinare nel privato la religione. Ma "neutralità" potrebbe anche, in una maniera più debole, o "inclusiva", semplicemente indicare che lo Stato tratta in modo eguale (e cioè senza discriminazioni) la pluralità delle forme religiose, consentendo a tutte di manifestarsi liberamente (esempio: libertà di esposizione del crocefisso, libertà di indossare il velo)[7].

2. La seconda soluzione – che, per opposizione alla prima, definirei "idealista" – memore delle "tragiche esperienze del passato" continua a far affidamento sullo Stato, e precisamente nella forma costituzionale che esso ora ha assunto "con la sua capacità di accoglienza e di integrazione pluralista tramite principi di libertà e di uguaglianza"[8]. I passi citati sono di Gustavo Zagrebelsky, e ci presentano un'immagine alquanto idealizzata dello Stato: se avesse funzionato la capacità di accoglienza e di integrazione, probabilmente non staremmo qui a parlare di quella grande minaccia per l'umanità che, seguendo questo approccio, porta con sé quella che con una felice espressione è stata definita "la rivincita di Dio".

La laicità sarebbe messa in pericolo non, si badi, dalla penetrazione dell'Islam in Occidente, ma dal "Grande Inquisitore" cattolico che, uscito dal romanzo di Dostoevskij, si aggirerebbe ora per l'Europa mettendo a fuoco e fiamme il "futuro della Costituzione". Ognuno è certo libero di farsi i sogni (o gli incubi) che vuole, l'importante però è che non li scambi per la realtà. E la realtà è che se oggi la religione è riapparsa sulla scena pubblica è perché è entrato in crisi il progetto di quella razionalità laica su cui si fonda la modernità con tutti i suoi corollari. Se la fede è ritornata a battere nel cuore degli uomini, è perché la ragione li stava facendo collassare. Se la religione è di nuovo al centro dell'attenzione è perché la politica si è rivelata fallimentare. Se la Chiesa Cattolica ha ripreso quota è perché lo Stato si è rivelato incapace di rispondere alle sfide della globalizzazione del mercato. Se gli dei hanno ripreso a combattersi tra loro, è perché destra e sinistra, democratici e

[7] Cfr. al riguardo R. Bhargava, *Secularism and its Critics*, Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2009[8]; e S. Huster, *Die ethische Neutralität des Staates*, Tübingen, Mohr Siebeck, 2002 .

[8] La citazione è ripresa dall'ultimo di una lunga serie di scritti di G. Zagrebelsky, *Stato e Chiesa. Cittadini e cattolici*, in *Religione e politica nella società post-secolare*, cit., pp. 42-63 (cit. a p. 58). Molti altri articoli, pubblicati su "La Repubblica", sono raccolti nei due seguenti volumi: G. Zagrebelsky, *Lo Stato e la Chiesa*, introduzione di E. Mauro, Roma, Editoriale L'Espresso, 2007; Id., *Contro l'etica della verità*, Roma-Bari, Laterza, 2008.

repubblicani, conservatori e progressisti, non costituiscono più forze concrete capaci di esprimere una sana e gagliarda dialettica politica.

Può il richiamo alla Costituzione e ai suoi valori, il cosiddetto "patriottismo costituzionale", essere la soluzione alla grave crisi che stiamo attraversando? Non si può nascondere l'impressione che questa soluzione, presentata come una difesa della laicità, messa a rischio dal ritorno della religione, trasformi la Costituzione in un "testo sacro". Al posto di Dio qui c'è la Costituzione divinizzata con tutti i suoi valori fondamentali. Ma i valori, come ci ha mostrato Carl Schmitt, sono tiranni[9].

Qualunque entità che oggi possa essere fissata come valore già domani può trasformarsi in disvalore ed essere sostituita da un altro valore. L'unico modo per frenare il conflitto sta nel loro bilanciamento. Ma a chi tocca questo compito se non ai giudici (costituzionali), i quali, ricoperti da un'aura di sacralità, diventano i sacerdoti di questa nuova Chiesa di cui i cittadini non possono che esserne i fedeli? Eh sì, perché quello che spesso si dimentica di dire è che questa pervasività della Costituzione è tutt'altro che sinonimo di pluralismo e democrazia. Ciò che semmai si sviluppa è una "*giuristocrazia*"[10]: la Costituzione è infatti in mano ai giudici costituzionali e ai giudici ordinari che possono applicarla direttamente anche nelle controversie tra i privati, al limite persino disapplicando la legge ordinaria, perché ciò che conta è la Legge. Insomma, questa soluzione è solo in apparenza "laica" e "neutrale": teme il ritorno della religione, perché è essa stessa una subdola forma di religione, la quale vede messa seriamente in pericolo la sua attuale fortuna dall'emergere di una forza spirituale che percepisce come antagonista.

Spesso oggi, dal versante laicista, si accusa la Chiesa cattolica per la sua invadenza nel dibattito pubblico su temi etici come la morale sessuale o la difesa della famiglia e sulle grandi questioni bioetiche dell'inizio e della fine della vita, ma la Chiesa in fondo non fa altro che tornare a rivendicare quel primato sulla coscienza che lo Stato costituzionale ha cercato di sottrarle. Si dice che in questo modo la Chiesa vorrebbe imporre la sua morale a tutti i cittadini, ma è piuttosto lo Stato che non può esigere dai credenti il compimento di azioni ritenute incompatibili con la propria fede. Lo Stato non può pretendere il silenzio dei credenti, in quan-

[9] Cfr. C. Schmitt, *Tyrannei der Werte* (1960); trad. it. *La tirannia dei valori*, a cura di P. Becchi, Brescia, Morcelliana, 2008. Al riguardo mi sia consentito qui rinviare al mio articolo *La critica schmittiana alla filosofia dei valori e il dibattito giusfilosofico italiano nell'immediato dopoguerra*, in «Filosofia politica», XXIII, n. 2, 2009, pp. 253-264. Si veda, da ultimo, anche T. Gazzolo, *"Valore" e "limite" in Carl Schmitt. Per una lettura della "Tirannia dei valori"*, in «Materiali per una storia della cultura giuridica», 2, 2010, pp. 417-444.

[10] Cfr. D. Cofrancesco, *Quel potere dei giudici che minaccia il liberalismo*, in «L'Occidentale», 28 Novembre 2008.

to credenti nello spazio pubblico[11], può soltanto esigere che gli argomenti religiosi siano tradotti nelle sedi istituzionali in un linguaggio universalmente accettabile. Uno Stato che rifiuta il contributo che la religione può dare alla vita pubblica è uno Stato onnicomprensivo e onnipotente. È lo Stato costituzionale che ha occupato territori che prima erano di competenza della morale e della religione – il nemico è di nuovo criminale, il peccatore un delinquente – e la religione oggi cerca in qualche modo di riappropriarsene. In fondo il ritorno della religione nella sfera pubblica è anche una risposta alla moralizzazione del diritto che diventa evidente nel momento in cui l'organizzazione costituzionale ha la pretesa di giuridificare l'intera esistenza umana.

IV

Come soddisfare allora il bisogno autentico di religiosità senza cadere nel conflitto tra i fondamentalismi e su cosa può nel contempo reggersi la Costituzione se vuole sfuggire alle trappole del relativismo giudiziale? Solo un principio universale in grado di superare i particolarismi delle diverse verità rivelate, assumendo nel contempo il ruolo di una sorta di *Grundnorm* al vertice delle organizzazioni positive, potrebbe costituire un ponte tra fede e sapere, tra religione e politica. Io credo che questo principio sia il "*principium dignitatis*", il quale da un lato consente di conservare l'eredità più profonda della nostra civiltà giudaico-cristiana e, dall'altro, di individuare un punto di riferimento che, a differenza dei diritti fondamentali, non è esposto alla trappola delle ponderazioni e delle limitazioni. Oggi esiste un ampio dibattito sul tema della dignità umana e molteplici sono le letture che di essa vengono date: non mi avventurerò ora su questi sentieri[12].

Ai fini del mio discorso mi limiterò a sottolineare come è anzitutto proprio grazie all'idea giudaico-cristiana di dignità che si è affermata nella storia del

[11] Si veda al riguardo il dibattito tra Robert Audi e Nicholas Wolterstorff nel volume R. Audi – N. Wolterstorff, *Religion in the Public Square: The Place of Religious Convictions in Political Debate*, New York, Rowman & Littlefield, 1997.

[12] Per farsi un'idea, si veda il mio volumetto *Il principio dignità umana*, Brescia, Morcelliana, 2009. Fondamentali però per il proseguo della mia argomentazione sono i contributi di E. Schockenhoff (per quanto riguarda il pensiero cattolico), di L. Pepi (per quanto riguarda l'ebraismo), di D. Ricca (per quel che riguarda la Riforma protestante) e di D. Anselmo (per quel che riguarda l'islamismo) pubblicati nel volume di A. Argiroffi – P. Becchi – D. Anselmo (a cura di), *Colloqui sulla dignità umana*, Roma, Aracne, 2008; D. Anselmo, *Shari'a e diritti umani*, Torino, Giappichelli, 2007 (che raccoglie in Appendice alcune importanti Dichiarazioni) e M. Borrmans, *Islam e Cristianesimo. Le vie del dialogo*, Milano, San Paolo Edizioni, 1993, in particolare alle pagine 85-101.

mondo l'universalità di quel principio. È infatti la teologia dell'uomo creato a immagine di Dio ad aver aperto la via ad una lettura potenzialmente egualitaria della dignità. Questa idea non implica infatti il privilegio dell'uomo di fede poiché ogni uomo, indipendentemente dalla confessione di appartenenza o anche se non appartiene ad alcuna confessione, per il solo fatto di essere uomo, è un'icona di Dio. Per dirla con il filosofo cattolico Spaemann ciascun uomo non è "qualcosa", ma "qualcuno"[13].

Si potrà replicare che la dignità può pure essere fondata sulla libertà e sulla responsabilità morale dell'uomo e dunque indipendentemente dal rapporto di trascendenza. Dall'umanesimo italiano a Pascal, da Pufendorf a Kant emerge certamente nella storia del pensiero europeo una difesa della dignità priva di giustificazione teologica. Avremmo comunque raggiunto un risultato non privo di rilievo: vale a dire un punto d'incontro tra fede e sapere, ragione laica e teologia, religione e politica nella comune difesa del principio della dignità umana. Ma questo punto d'incontro, va pur detto, riguarderebbe essenzialmente l'Occidente e le sue radici giudaico-cristiane. Per l'Islam l'uomo non è l'immagine di Dio. Con ciò non voglio affatto dire che il tema della dignità non sia presente nella religione musulmana[14], ma certo assume un rilievo diverso. E allora non corriamo forse il rischio che con la "dignità umana" avvenga qualcosa di simile a quello che è già successo per i "diritti umani", usati spesso come grimaldelli con i quali gli occidentali aggrediscono, invadono, bombardano, occupano Paesi e popoli, con la pretesa di fare il loro bene? A "immagine e somiglianza di Dio" o "a immagine e somiglianza dell'Occidente, con i suoi valori e le sue istituzioni"? E, inoltre, la stessa convergenza tra fede giudaico-cristiana e ragione illuministica potrebbe essere piuttosto fragile dal momento che il pluralismo delle visioni del mondo è un dato di fatto ineliminabile. Anche i contenuti della dignità, allora, potrebbero essere molto diversi (l'embrione è già titolare di dignità? E che cosa significa che bisogna garantire a tutti condizioni di vita dignitose?).

Il conflitto tra i valori si ripropone dunque come conflitto tra visioni – tanto in ambito interreligioso quanto all'interno del confronto tra fede e ragione – tra loro inconciliabili della dignità umana. Così anche la nostra soluzione sembra

[13] Cfr. R. Spaemann, *Personen. Versuche über den Unterschied zwischen "etwas" und "jemand"*, Stuttgart, Klett-Cotta, 1998; trad. it. *Persone. Sulla differenza tra "qualcosa" e "qualcuno"*, Roma-Bari, Laterza, 2005.

[14] Va peraltro osservato che il grande teologo Ghazâlî alla fine dell' XI secolo sosteneva la somiglianza tra Adamo e Dio: "Una cosa simile ad un'altra si sente attratta da essa, e perché ogni forma tende a corrispondere a quella che le è simile". Cfr. Abû Hâmîd Al- Ghazâlî, *Ihya' 'ulûm al-dîn*, al-Bâbî al-Halabî, Cairo, 1358/1939, vol. IV: *K. Al-mahabba*, p. 248. Cito da M. Borrmans, *Islam e Cristianesimo*, cit., p. 94.

messa sotto scacco e neppure la dignità essere in grado di offrire la base per un principio comune. Forse l'esito è meno fallimentare di quanto pare a prima vista.

Consideriamo anzitutto la cosa dal punto di vista delle diverse prospettive religiose. Anche se l'Islam ha una concezione della dignità diversa da quella delle due altre grandi religioni monoteiste, questo non significa che vi sia fra entrambe un'assoluta incompatibilità. La concezione islamica della dignità è inconciliabile solo con quella versione moderna della dignità che la riconnette strettamente, e unilateralmente, all'autonomia e all'autodeterminazione dei singoli individui, ma questo non fa venir meno l'idea che anche per l'Islam solo l'uomo sia titolare di dignità poiché è l'unico essere del creato ad aver accettato di stringere un patto con Dio. Sotto questo profilo la dignità viene dunque riconosciuta a *tutti* gli uomini e non solo a quelli di fede musulmana, esattamente come a tutti gli uomini (e non soltanto agli ebrei ed ai cristiani) viene riconosciuto il loro essere "immagine di Dio".

Così le tre religioni monoteistiche convergono almeno in un punto: l'uomo è al centro del creato e proprio per questa posizione centrale, del tutto privilegiata, possiede una dignità. Questo significa che egli è un essere costitutivamente aperto alla trascendenza, e proprio in virtù di questa apertura è chiamato ad un agire responsabile sulla terra. Si potrebbe vedere in tutto ciò una convergenza piuttosto superficiale e concludere che non abbia molto senso cercare una parentela tra Islam e Cristianesimo. Bisogna pur ammettere che le verità rivelate necessariamente contengono elementi di chiusura: proprio se vogliono rimanere fedeli al messaggio originario non possono che essere esclusiviste[15]. Ma questo riguarda il piano dei dogmi, il che non impedisce che un accordo si possa trovare, per così dire, non su Dio e il modo di intendere la divinità, ma sull'uomo e il modo di intendere l'umanità.

Se il rinvio alla dignità in sé può forse dir poco per il dialogo interreligioso, diventa di assoluto rilievo quando appellandosi ad essa, si vuole fare riferimento all'unicità che rappresenta l'uomo nel disegno della creazione e alla responsabilità che da ciò ne deriva. Sono consapevole che il punto sarebbe meritevole di un approfondimento, ma qui, in conclusione, vorrei almeno accennare all'altro tema: quello che riguarda il significato che assume la dignità nel confronto tra fede e sapere.

Anche qui, a prima vista, pare si fronteggino due visioni opposte della dignità: quella laica che insiste sulla dignità di ciascuno, nel senso che è ognuno di noi, in ultima istanza, a decidere su cosa sia per lui degno o non degno, e quella di

[15] È un aspetto messo bene in evidenza da G. Filoramo, *La dignità e le tradizioni religiose*, in *Dignità umana e dibattito bioetico*, Roma, Studium, 2009, pp. 57-68.

matrice religiosa, che vede nella dignità, in ultima istanza, una dote, un dono specifico fatto all'uomo da Dio[16]. Tanto la concezione laica si adatta perfettamente al persistente pluralismo che caratterizza le nostre società occidentali, quanto quella religiosa sembra invece connessa ad un mondo ormai scomparso. Ma siamo proprio certi che sia così?

La rinascita attuale del sentimento religioso pone seri dubbi su questa diagnosi. Beninteso, è incontestabile che il valore dell'autonomia, dell'autodeterminazione, sia ormai entrato a far parte delle nostre vite, perlomeno in Occidente, ma è sufficiente a spiegare il significato della dignità umana? Impedire ad una donna di prostituirsi, di assumere una parte in un film a luci rosse o di esibirsi nuda in un peep show, poiché tutto ciò offende la dignità umana potrebbe essere considerato un'insopportabile invadenza nella sfera privata di un individuo. Ma ci spingeremmo fino al punto di accettare, con le medesime argomentazioni, che una persona si sottometta volontariamente a rapporti di schiavitù o venda i suoi organi? Con molta probabilità no (o quantomeno sarebbe piuttosto difficile argomentare convincentemente a sostegno di questa tesi).

In tale modo però abbiamo già implicitamente posto un limite oggettivo alla pretesa dignità soggettiva. Insomma, l'autonomia da sola non basta a spiegare la dignità e questo diventa tanto più evidente quanto passiamo dall'etica individuale all'etica che riguarda l'identità della nostra specie. E così ritorniamo al punto da cui avevamo preso le mosse.

È giustificabile grazie agli interventi di ingegneria genetica modificare il codice genetico dell'uomo mutando così la sua identità? Come uscire dalla palude dell'attuale nichilismo per cui tutto ciò che è possibile è anche permesso? Qui si rivela insufficiente la dignità dei moderni e si apre di nuovo uno spazio per un dialogo fruttuoso tra fede antica e sapere tecnologico. La coscienza del proprio limite, il rispetto che sentiamo verso qualcosa che non dipende in fondo dal nostro accordo, ma che è dato a ciascuno di noi in modo indisponibile apre di nuovo l'uomo alla trascendenza[17]. Così il risveglio di Dio è al contempo il risveglio dell'uomo, che rischiava di rimanere prigioniero di un incubo: quello della "morte di dio" e, con lui, della morte dell'uomo.

[16] Cfr. al riguardo P. Becchi, *Il principio dignità umana*, cit.

[17] È questa l'intuizione che mi pare accomunare due pensatori tra loro diversissimi come Jürgen Habermas e Hans Jonas, il cui principio della responsabilità, da lui assunto come assioma, risulta difficilmente fondabile – come lui stesso ammette – senza un ricorso alla religione. Cfr. H. Jonas, *Das Prinzip Verantwortung*, Frankfurt a.M., Suhrkamp, 1979; trad. it. *Il principio responsabilità*, Torino, Einaudi, 1990, p. 17.

2nd Meeting of Bishops' Conference Delegates for Relations with Muslims in Europe

Turin, Italy, 31 May – 2 June 2011

TOWARDS AN "INCULTURATION" OF ISLAM*

Press Release

Turin, 2 June 2011

(...) the delegates from the Bishops' Conferences noted particularly the process underway in Europe which can encourage the birth of an Islam more purely and typically religious than political; they expressed their sympathy for the desire for democracy and freedom of many peoples from different Arab nations, hoping that this wind of change may also lead to the realisation of true religious freedom in these countries; and, finally, expressing a critical assessment of the term "Islamophobia", they exhorted Muslims to develop positive and sincere relations in the various contexts in which they find themselves in Europe.

The interest with which the Catholic Church is following the dynamics of the inclusion of residents and citizens of the Muslim religion into the European

* The Council of the Bishops' Conferences of Europe (CCEE) gathers the Presidents of the current 33 European Bishops' Conferences of this Continent, represented by their Presidents, and the Archbishops of Luxembourg and of the Principality of Monaco, the Maronite Archbishop of Cyprus, as well as the Bishop of Chişinău (Moldavia). The President is Cardinal Péter Erdő, Archbishop of Esztergom-Budapest, Primate of Hungary; the Vice-Presidents are Cardinal Josip Bosanić, Archbishop of Zagreb, and Cardinal Jean-Pierre Ricard, Archbishop of Bordeaux. The General Secretary of CCEE is Mgr Duarte da Cunha. The headquarters of the Secretariat is in St Gallen (Switzerland). For further information: Thierry Bonaventura CCEE Media officer+41788 516040, thierry.bonaventura@ccee.ch

context, both at individual and community levels, was confirmed during the meeting of delegates for relations with Islam from the European Bishops' Conferences. It is a complex process not lacking in ambiguities, from which emerges the challenge – which becomes reality – of the gradual inculturation of Islam in Europe, with the subsequent manifestation of its more truly religious and moral dimension, rather than its political one. All the cultural and theological initiatives which are an expression of what is described as "theology of inculturation", are followed with great interest since they open and strengthen processes of positive participation in European social and cultural life, in a pluralist context, open to inter-religious and inter-cultural dialogue.

In such a framework, the Church follows with interest the expectations and initiatives arising within the heart of the Muslim communities aimed at providing their own religious leaders – imams, teachers – with an appropriate theological and cultural formation to carry out their religious role effectively in a European context; the Church hopes that such initiatives – including the establishment of Chairs of Islamic Theology in public Universities in countries where theology is a discipline present in the university system – can be organised, with the right adaptations, according to the legal framework of the relations existing between State and Church. In this perspective the Church views positively that denominational religious education in the state school can include other religious traditions as well, including Islam, holding to the requirements provided for in the different States for the pursuit of such a purpose.

Widening the horizon to the Mediterranean area, the Bishops' Conference delegates are sympathetic to the expressions of a desire for democracy, freedom, and the appeal for respect for the dignity of the human person of which young people have been the protagonists in various Arab countries in these recent months of great political change; and they hope that the process underway can lead to the full acquisition of the right of freedom of religion in such countries, in such a way that Arab Christians, too, can enjoy such freedom in a substantial manner in the framework of a true egalitarian citizenship.

The delegates then offered a critical assessment of the term "Islamophobia", used to interpret the reactions of hostility towards Islam present in European society, preferring to use rather the categories "fear" and "hostility". While confirming the Church's commitment to overcoming such reactions which lead to intolerance, they exhort Muslims to develop positive and sincere relations in the different contexts so as to rebut such interpretations.

Finally, the delegates confirmed the conviction of the Catholic Church in Europe in pursuing with renewed commitment the dialogue with Muslims according to the school of the Second Vatican Council and the teaching of Pope Benedict XVI, a dialogue in which Christians and Muslims are called to take on

three challenges: the challenge of identity (to know and accept who and what we are); the challenge of otherness (our differences must not lead to hatred, but should be considered a source of mutual enrichment); the challenge of sincerity, which implies manifesting one's own faith without imposing it in a pluralist context and in a perspective of dialogue.

The work, guided by the Archbishop of Bordeaux and CCEE Vice-president, Cardinal Jean-Pierre Ricard, also saw the participation of the President of the Pontifical Council for Inter-religious Dialogue, Cardinal Jean Louis Tauran. (...).

Christian Witness in a Multi-Religious World: Recommendations for Conduct

Report

Geneva, Switzerland, 28 June 2011

On Tuesday 28 June 2011, at the Ecumenical Center of the World Council of Churches (WCC), in Geneva an important joint ecumenical document, "Christian Witness in a Multi-Religious World: Recommendations for Conduct", was launched.

This is the first time that a document has been issued by the World Council of Churches (WCC), through its program on Interreligious Dialogue and Cooperation, in conjunction with the World Evangelical Alliance (WEA) and the Pontifical Council for Interreligious Dialogue (PCID) of the Holy See.

The delegation of the Pontifical Council for Interreligious Dialogue led by His Eminence Cardinal Jean-Louis Tauran, together with Archbishop Pier Luigi Celata, Secretary of the same Pontifical Council; Archbishop Silvio Tomasi, Head Mission of the Holy See to the U.N. in Geneva; Msgr. Andrew Vissanu Thanya-Anan, Undersecretary of the PCID and Msgr. Juan Fernando Usma, representing the Pontifical Council for Promoting of Christian Unity.

From the World Council of Churches (WCC), were Rev. Dr. Olav Fykse Tveit, Secretary General, leading the delegation; Dr. George Mathews Chunakara, Director of International Affairs and Interreligious Dialogue and Relations; Ms. Rima Barsoum and staff of the WCC.

The World Evangelical Alliance (WEA) was represented by Dr. Geoff Tunnicliffe, Secretary General; Dr. John Langlois; Dr. Thomas Schirrmacher; Dr. Rosalee Velosso- Ewell and colleagues of the WEA.

There were around 100 distinguished guests along with several media and journalists attended the ceremony of launching the document.

The President of the PCID, His Eminence Cardinal Tauran underlined three points of reflection on the launching:

1. In spite of our divisions, we Christians have the duty to proclaim our faith without any compromise;
2. The Christian message has to be proclaimed but never imposed;
3. As religious leaders, we are entrusted with promoting a pedagogy of dialogue.

Cardinal Tauran added that "we come and join hands together, putting into concrete practice the declaration that we make. When believers of different religions, as well as people of good will, sit and reflect together, they realize, that common approaches and convictions are much more numerous than the issues that divide us. Finally, all this great patrimony of ours must be put at the disposal of society at large, because ecumenical and interreligious dialogue is not only for internal consumption of our communities but it has to be a prophetic call for every man and woman. Remembering the disappointments and the blessings which have marked our common journey we entrust these recommendations to the Lord, confident in His providence and in the power of the Holy Spirit. It is my hope that this new document will inspire opportune reflections and initiatives at the grassroots level of our Communities. Therefore, when so many of our brothers and sisters seem to be lost before the riddles of life, we shall help them to discover that we are all pilgrims walking towards Someone who is waiting for us: Jesus who says *'I came that they may have life and have it more abundantly' (Jn. 10:10)."*

The Secretaries General of the WCC and of the WEA also agreed that this is a big step for the three organizations to seek a same direction in being witness to Christian life, joining together with all Christian communities in the world, to proclaim the Good News with hope using the recommendations for conduct in respecting other religions. The promise was made to work more closely together in future.

The ceremony of launching concluded in a very simple way with prayer led by Archbishop Pier Luigi Celata.

For almost 35 years now (since 1977), there have been various forms of collaboration between the World Council of Churches (WCC - Geneva) through its Program on Interreligious Dialogue and Co-operation (IRDC) and the Pontifical Council for Interreligious Dialogue (PCID) of the Holy See. These years have been marked by annual joint-staff meetings and reflections on interreligious themes. These reflections have been fruitful resulting in several common projects in our shared concern to further the important work of proclamation and interreligious dialogue.

In 2005 the question of conversion emerged as one issue to be discussed on a worldwide scale during a major interreligious event, the "Critical Moment Interreligious Conference" organized by the WCC (6-9 June 2005) in Geneva. There was a proposal at that time for the WCC to be much clearer on the question of religious conversion as an issue in interreligious relations.

The WCC and PCID initiated a project entitled "Interreligious Reflection on Conversion - From Controversy to a Shared Code of Conduct". The project was made up of three major consultations, about double as many smaller meetings

of staff and experts (mostly called the "drafting committee") and an on-going discussion through email and telephone that later on included many Christian leaders worldwide, who were asked for their evaluation of the draft.

The first consultation "Conversion: Assessing the Reality" met at Lariano, Italy, 12- 16 May 2006 with the scope to map the problems and thus was an inter-religious meeting. There were 27 people, representing Buddhism, Christianity, Hinduism, Islam, Judaism and Yoruba religion agreed that a code of conduct for propagating one's own faith should be achieved. They stated: "We affirm that while everyone has a right to invite others to an understanding of their faith, it should not be exercised by violating other's rights and religious sensibilities."

The second consultation" Towards an ethical approach to conversion: Christian witness in a multi-religious world", which was prepared by a small group meeting in Geneva, 11-12 January 2007, took place as a larger meeting of all branches of Christianity in Toulouse, France, 8-12 August 2007 with 45 participants. It was here that the necessity of specific recommendations was discussed at length and the topics that had to be addressed in a "code", as it was still called at that time, were set out. The idea would be that Christians need first of all find a code of conduct among themselves in their relation to other religions. If even Christians would not agree amongst each other on a peaceful way for their witness that respects the human dignity and rights of others, how could they expect an agreement with all religions?

After Toulouse, a draft committee of the three bodies involved started to work on the text of the recommendations, following the topics listed in Toulouse. The text was revised a number of times based on discussion with the leadership and after taking in reactions from church leaders from all over the world who asked to review the text.

Finally, the text was taken to a third consultation in Bangkok under the title "Christian Witness in a Multi-Religious World: Recommendations for a Code of Conduct", 25-29 January 2011, with 45 high ranking representatives of the three bodies plus church leaders and experts, who had the sole task to discuss and revise the text of the recommendations. In groups and in plenary the text was discussed line by line. There were many fine and valuable contributions.

After Bangkok, there were only very minor changes agreed upon between PCID, WCC and WEA, in particular changing the word "code" which could lead to a certain confusion in terms. Therefore the final document is entitled "Christian Witness in a Multi-Religious World: Recommendations for Conduct".

During the period of the process of drafting and finalizing the document over a period of five years, there were many changes in staff and leadership in PCID as well as in WCC, however, the process still continued well. This indicates that the project, launched on 28 June 2011, cannot be considered only a project

bound to certain persons, but rather a joint need of the whole Christian community and a great achievement born out of institutions working together over time.

OFFICIAL TEXT

CHRISTIAN WITNESS IN A MULTI-RELIGIOUS WORLD: RECOMMENDATIONS FOR CONDUCT

PREAMBLE

Mission belongs to the very being of the church. Proclaiming the word of God and witnessing to the world is essential for every Christian. At the same time, it is necessary to do so according to gospel principles, with full respect and love for all human beings.

Aware of the tensions between people and communities of different religious convictions and the varied interpretations of Christian witness, the Pontifical Council for Interreligious Dialogue (PCID), the World Council of Churches (WCC) and, at the invitation of the WCC, the World Evangelical Alliance (WEA), met during a period of 5 years to reflect and produce this document to serve as a set of recommendations for conduct on Christian witness around the world. This document does not intend to be a theological statement on mission but to address practical issues associated with Christian witness in a multi-religious world.

The purpose of this document is to encourage churches, church councils and mission agencies to reflect on their current practices and to use the recommendations in this document to prepare, where appropriate, their own guidelines for their witness and mission among those of different religions and among those who do not profess any particular religion. It is hoped that Christians across the world will study this document in the light of their own practices in witnessing to their faith in Christ, both by word and deed.

A BASIS FOR CHRISTIAN WITNESS

1. For Christians it is a privilege and joy to give an accounting for the hope that is within them and to do so with gentleness and respect (cf. 1 Peter 3:15).

2. Jesus Christ is the supreme witness (cf. John 18:37). Christian witness is always a sharing in his witness, which takes the form of proclamation of the king-

dom, service to neighbour and the total gift of self even if that act of giving leads to the cross. Just as the Father sent the Son in the power of the Holy Spirit, so believers are sent in mission to witness in word and action to the love of the triune God.

3. The example and teaching of Jesus Christ and of the early church must be the guides for Christian mission. For two millennia Christians have sought to follow Christ's way by sharing the good news of God's kingdom (cf. Luke 4:16-20).

4. Christian witness in a pluralistic world includes engaging in dialogue with people of different religions and cultures (cf. Acts 17:22-28).

5. In some contexts, living and proclaiming the gospel is difficult, hindered or even prohibited, yet Christians are commissioned by Christ to continue faithfully in solidarity with one another in their witness to him (cf. Matthew 28:19-20; Mark 16:14-18; Luke 24:44-48; John 20:21; Acts 1:8).

6. If Christians engage in inappropriate methods of exercising mission by resorting to deception and coercive means, they betray the gospel and may cause suffering to others. Such departures call for repentance and remind us of our need for God's continuing grace (cf. Romans 3:23).

7. Christians affirm that while it is their responsibility to witness to Christ, conversion is ultimately the work of the Holy Spirit (cf. John 16:7-9; Acts 10:44-47). They recognize that the Spirit blows where the Spirit wills in ways over which no human being has control (cf. John 3:8).

PRINCIPLES

Christians are called to adhere to the following principles as they seek to fulfil Christ's commission in an appropriate manner, particularly within interreligious contexts.

1. **Acting in God's love.** Christians believe that God is the source of all love and, accordingly, in their witness they are called to live lives of love and to love their neighbour as themselves (cf. Matthew 22:34-40; John 14:15).

2. **Imitating Jesus Christ.** In all aspects of life, and especially in their witness, Christians are called to follow the example and teachings of Jesus Christ, sharing his love, giving glory and honour to God the Father in the power of the Holy Spirit (cf. John 20:21-23).

3. **Christian virtues.** Christians are called to conduct themselves with integrity, charity, compassion and humility, and to overcome all arrogance, condescension and disparagement (cf. Galatians 5:22).

4. **Acts of service and justice.** Christians are called to act justly and to love tenderly (cf. Micah 6:8). They are further called to serve others and in so doing to

recognize Christ in the least of their sisters and brothers (cf. Matthew 25:45). Acts of service, such as providing education, health care, relief services and acts of justice and advocacy are an integral part of witnessing to the gospel. The exploitation of situations of poverty and need has no place in Christian outreach. Christians should denounce and refrain from offering all forms of allurements, including financial incentives and rewards, in their acts of service.

5. **Discernment in ministries of healing.** As an integral part of their witness to the gospel, Christians exercise ministries of healing. They are called to exercise discernment as they carry out these ministries, fully respecting human dignity and ensuring that the vulnerability of people and their need for healing are not exploited.

6. **Rejection of violence.** Christians are called to reject all forms of violence, even psychological or social, including the abuse of power in their witness. They also reject violence, unjust discrimination or repression by any religious or secular authority, including the violation or destruction of places of worship, sacred symbols or texts.

7. **Freedom of religion and belief.** Religious freedom including the right to publicly profess, practice, propagate and change one's religion flows from the very dignity of the human person which is grounded in the creation of all human beings in the image and likeness of God (cf. Genesis 1:26). Thus, all human beings have equal rights and responsibilities. Where any religion is instrumentalized for political ends, or where religious persecution occurs, Christians are called to engage in a prophetic witness denouncing such actions.

8. **Mutual respect and solidarity.** Christians are called to commit themselves to work with all people in mutual respect, promoting together justice, peace and the common good. Interreligious cooperation is an essential dimension of such commitment.

9. **Respect for all people.** Christians recognize that the gospel both challenges and enriches cultures. Even when the gospel challenges certain aspects of cultures, Christians are called to respect all people. Christians are also called to discern elements in their own cultures that are challenged by the gospel.

10. **Renouncing false witness.** Christians are to speak sincerely and respectfully; they are to listen in order to learn about and understand others' beliefs and practices, and are encouraged to acknowledge and appreciate what is true and good in them. Any comment or critical approach should be made in a spirit of mutual respect, making sure not to bear false witness concerning other religions.

11. **Ensuring personal discernment.** Christians are to acknowledge that changing one's religion is a decisive step that must be accompanied by sufficient time for adequate reflection and preparation, through a process ensuring full personal freedom.

12. Building interreligious relationships. Christians should continue to build relationships of respect and trust with people of different religions so as to facilitate deeper mutual understanding, reconciliation and cooperation for the common good.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The Third Consultation organized by the World Council of Churches and the PCID of the Holy See in collaboration with the WEA and with participation from the largest Christian families of faith (Catholic, Orthodox, Protestant, Evangelical and Pentecostal), having acted in a spirit of ecumenical cooperation to prepare this document for consideration by churches, national and regional confessional bodies and mission organizations, and especially those working in interreligious contexts, **recommends** that these bodies:

1. ***study*** the issues set out in this document and where appropriate ***formulate guidelines for conduct*** regarding Christian witness applicable to their particular contexts. Where possible this should be done ecumenically, and in consultation with representatives of other religions.

2. ***build*** relationships of respect and trust with people of all religions, in particular at institutional levels between churches and other religious communities, engaging in on-going interreligious dialogue as part of their Christian commitment. In certain contexts, where years of tension and conflict have created deep suspicions and breaches of trust between and among communities, interreligious dialogue can provide new opportunities for resolving conflicts, restoring justice, healing of memories, reconciliation and peace-building.

3. ***encourage*** Christians to ***strengthen*** their own religious identity and faith while ***deepening*** their knowledge and understanding of different religions, and to do so also taking into account the perspectives of the adherents of those religions. Christians should avoid misrepresenting the beliefs and practices of people of different religions.

4. ***cooperate*** with other religious communities engaging in interreligious advocacy towards justice and the common good and, wherever possible, standing together in solidarity with people who are in situations of conflict.

5. ***call*** on their governments to ensure that freedom of religion is properly and comprehensively respected, recognizing that in many countries religious institutions and persons are inhibited from exercising their mission.

6. ***pray*** for their neighbours and their well-being, recognizing that prayer is integral to who we are and what we do, as well as to Christ's mission.

APPENDIX: Background to the document

1. In today's world there is increasing collaboration among Christians and between Christians and followers of different religions. The Pontifical Council for Interreligious Dialogue (PCID) of the Holy See and the World Council of Churches' Programme on Interreligious Dialogue and Co-operation (WCC-IRDC) have a history of such collaboration. Examples of themes on which the PCID/IRDC have collaborated in the past are: Interreligious Marriage (1994-1997), Interreligious Prayer (1997-1998) and African Religiosity (2000-2004). This document is a result of their work together.

2. There are increasing interreligious tensions in the world today, including violence and the loss of human life. Politics, economics and other factors play a role in these tensions. Christians too are sometimes involved in these conflicts, whether voluntarily or involuntarily, either as those who are persecuted or as those participating in violence. In response to this the PCID and IRDC decided to address the issues involved in a joint process towards producing shared recommendations for conduct on Christian witness. The WCC-IRDC invited the World Evangelical Alliance (WEA) to participate in this process, and they have gladly done so.

3. Initially two consultations were held: the first, in Lariano, Italy, from 12 to 18 May 2006, was entitled "Assessing the Reality" where representatives of different religions shared their views and experiences on the question of conversion. A statement from the consultation reads in part: "We affirm that, while everyone has a right to invite others to an understanding of their faith, it should not be exercised by violating others' rights and religious sensibilities. Freedom of religion enjoins upon all of us the equally non-negotiable responsibility to respect faiths other than our own, and never to denigrate, vilify or misrepresent them for the purpose of affirming superiority of our faith."

4. The second, an inter-Christian consultation, was held in Toulouse, France, from 8 to 12 August 2007, to reflect on these same issues. Questions on *Family and Community, Respect for Others, Economy, Marketing and Competition*, and *Violence and Politics* were thoroughly discussed. The pastoral and missionary issues around these topics became the background for theological reflection and for the principles developed in this document. Each issue is important in its own right and deserves more attention that can be given in these recommendations.

5. The participants of the third (inter-Christian) consultation met in Bangkok, Thailand, from 25 to 28 January 2011 and finalized this document.

"Christian Witness in a Multi-religious World: Recommendations for Conduct". *First Anniversary: Rethinking back and Looking ahead*

FR. INDUNIL J. KODITHUWAKKU K.*

The ecumenically groundbreaking document of the Pontifical Council for Interreligious Dialogue (PCID), the World Council of Churches' Programme on Interreligious Dialogue and Co-operation (WCC-IRDC) and the World Evangelical Alliance (WEA) entitled, "Christian Witness in a Multi-religious World: Recommendations for Conduct" reached its first anniversary on 28 of June 2012. This article seeks to analyse its urgency and usefulness to Christians to be members of One Body and also to be witnesses to the world as a sign and symbol of the reign of God and to collaborate with other religions to bring peace and harmony to the world.

The following statistics of the Christian Denominations give us a bird-eye view of the contemporary complex situation of world Christianity. Christian denominations have swelled at an alarming speed in the course of last two centuries: 500 (1800), 1600 (1900) 18,700 (1970), 34,100 (2000), 43,000 (2012) 55,000 (forecast 2025).[1] Furthermore, foreign mission sending agencies too continue to grow rapidly: 200 (1800), 2,200 (1970), 4000 (2000), 4,900 (2012), and 6000 (forecast 2025)[2]. Christian expansion in Africa and Asia is a blessing as well as a problem. Christianity reborn with global growth manifests the fruits of mission and the spread of the Gospel of Jesus Christ. Yet, the mushrooming denominations and conflicting theologies of mission and conversion also have sowed the seed of discord in the past and unfortunately continue to bear bitter fruits to this day. Some new denominations add fuel to the fire with further fragmentation by marring the quest for the Church unity in Christ.

The Conflicting understanding of mission and conversion among denominations is not only a serious ecumenical problem but also a burning interreligious

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[1] See: "Status of Global Mission, in the Context of AD 1800-2025, in *International Bulletin of Missionary Research* - IBMR 36, (2012/1), p.29, line 41.

[2] *Ibid*, p.29, line 44.

issue. The aggressive missionary zeal of some Christian denominations (even among some radical Islamic groups and Hindus) has given birth to conflicts and tensions not only among Christians but also with other religions especially in Asia. Thus, other religions often accuse Christians of "unethical conversions" or "forced conversions". Traditional Christian churches point their finger at some new Christian groups as the culprits. Specially, new Christian groups are fighting for religious liberty and accuse other religions of persecuting them. The growing religious fundamentalism further threatens the peace and the stability in the world and also laboriously built interreligious dialogue. Besides, the process of globalization, as it operates today, leads the vulnerable ones in the society to marginalization or peripheralisation. The dream of a "global village" has become a nightmare or a mirage. The resistance to globalization by different cultures manifests through anti-globalism, ethnification, fundamentalism, and primitivism. Thus, instead of integration, globalization has brought about more disintegration. Hence, the Church ought to shoulder the mission of building the Reign of God together with other religions and people of good will. This mission invites the Church to convert the "global village" into a symbol of integration, unification, and harmony, in place of actual difference, differentiation, demarcation, discrimination, and dissonance. In this turmoil and dark situation, the document, "Christian Witness in a Multi-religious World: Recommendations for Conduct" sheds a beacon of light and hope by laying down a solid foundation for interreligious and ecumenical dialogue.

Historical Background to the Document

The document is the fruit of a five year long period of consultations, compromises and consensus. The first consultation entitled "Conversion, Assessing the Reality" was held in Lariano, Italy 2006, with the representatives of different religions (Buddhism, Christianity, Hinduism, Islam, Judaism and Yoruba religion)[3] and the PCID and the WCC-IRDC. The consultation on the theme "conversion" was timely and urgent at that time as the "Report from the Interreligious Consultation on Conversion - Assessing the Reality", rightly mentions, it is "an issue which is often the cause of misunderstanding and tension among communities in many parts of the world". The phenomena of "unethical conversion", "forced conversion", "induced conversion", "anti-conversion bills", "prohibition of

[3] Interreligious Reflection on Conversion – Assessing the Reality, Lariano (RM): 12-16 May 2006, *Pro Dialogo Bulletin*, 122 (2006/2), pp. 210-213.

forcible conversion of religion", "sheep-stealing" etc. began to supplant previously hard-built ecumenical and interreligious solidarity and cooperation. Subsequently, bitterness and distrust grew among Christians and also Christians and other religions in many countries especially in Asia. The first Consultation provided the participants to express their feelings, concerns, wounds, and fears on conversion. The Report of the Consultation in 2006 ended, paving the way for the next one thus: "We see the need for and usefulness of a continuing exercise to collectively evolve a 'code of conduct' on conversion, which all faiths should follow. We therefore feel that inter-religious dialogues on the issue of conversion should continue at various levels".

"Towards an Ethical Approach to Conversion - Christian Witness in a Multi-religious World" was the second Consultation held in Toulouse, France, 9 – 12 August 2007. The World Evangelical Alliance together with Pentecostals from the United States were invited by the WCC, to participate in the consultation. Thus, the second one was a consultation solely between representatives of Christians to provide input into the eventual Code. The second Consultation was historic owing to the following reasons: there were representatives from 90% of the world's two billion Christians; consultation on the allegation of unethical methods of conversion to Christianity; common forum for Christians of different churches and ecclesial communities to iron out their distrust and misunderstandings; evaluate their missionary methods in multi-religious societies making a distinction between aggressive proselytizing and evangelization; taking stock of the reactions of the other religions to Christian mission; seeking a balance between the mandate to evangelize and the right to choose one's religion etc.

The participants of the third (inter-Christian) consultation met in Bangkok, Thailand, from 25-28, January, 2011 and finalized the document "Christian Witness in a Multi-religious World: Recommendations for Conduct".[4]

Content of the Document

The document is not a theological statement on mission but rather a pastoral and catechetical instruction on Christian witness in a religiously plural milieu. The preamble of the document affirms that the Church is missionary by her very

[4] http://www.vatican.va/roman_curia/pontifical_councils/interelg/documents/rc_pc_interelg_doc_20111110_testimonianza-cristiana_en.html

nature and proclaiming the Word of God and witnessing to the world are indispensable for Christians. Nevertheless, it reminds that mission ought to be carried out with respect and love for all human beings, avoiding "sectarian impulse", "the spirit of proselytism" and any "sense of superiority". Furthermore, it contains three main parts namely: (i) a basis for Christian witness, (ii). principles and (iii). recommendations. Let us pay attention to them succinctly.

(i). A basis for Christian witness is enumerated with a scriptural basis. Thus, Jesus is the supreme witness and Christian witness emanates from the triune God in the form of proclaiming the kingdom, serving the neighbour and the total renunciation of the self. Hence, the teaching of Jesus Christ and the early witnesses of the Church, provide the guide for Christian mission. In a multi-religious environment, the Christian witness embraces dialogue with religions and cultures. The witness ought to go on, in and out of season in spite of hindrances. Christian witness must avoid un-Christian methods of carrying out mission such as resorting to deception and coercive means for conversion. Christians can and must witness but conversion is the work of the Holy Spirit.

(ii). Principles for Christian witness in fulfilling Christ's commission in a multi-religious context. There are twelve principles: acting in God's love, imitating Jesus Christ, Christian virtues, acts of service and justice, discernment in ministries of healing, rejection of violence, freedom of religion and belief, mutual respect and solidarity, respect for all people, renouncing false witness, ensuring personal discernment and building interreligious relations. The above principles, laying down a practical guide with ethical approach, seek to overcome and minimize the controversies and tensions related to Christian mission and conversion.

(iii). Six Recommendations lay down a pastoral and catechetical approach to Christians especially working in interreligious contexts. Accordingly, Christians need to: (a). Study issues mentioned in this document with an eye to formulate guidelines relevant to Christian witness in the given context if possible ecumenically and in consultation with representatives of other religions. (b). Build relationships of respect and trust among churches and other religious communities to iron out suspicions and breaches of trust. Thus, interreligious dialogue contributes for resolving conflicts, restoring justice, healing of memories, reconciliation and peace-building. (c). Encourage Christians to strengthen their own religious identity and faith and deepening the knowledge of other religions. (d). Cooperate with other religions for justice and common good. (e). Call on governments to respect religious freedom. (f). Pray for all neighbours.

Newness of the Document

1. Towards a New Way of Being Christians

It is the first document of its kind in the history of the Church. The three main world Christian bodies have responded with this document to criticisms levelled against Christians by some religious communities of proselytism. The document does not dilute the missionary mandate of the Church. Instead, it interprets the mission in the light of prevailing situation in multi-religious societies. The motto of mission in the document seems, *"not without my brother and sister"* and it observes the ancient golden rule: "*We must treat others as we wish others to treat us*". It argues that the Christian right to evangelize must pay attention to the cultural, religious historical and sociological sensibilities of the hearers. This document lays a solid foundation for a new era of ecumenical dialogue. Unfortunately, many local traditional churches do not make a distinction between new religious movements (NRMs) and sects and the ecclesial communities. There still exist old prejudices which brand all new ecclesial communities as "sects". On the other hand, some new ecclesial communities are not only hostile and disrespectful toward traditional churches but also their methods of evangelization, aim at winning their members to these groups. Therefore, the conversion controversy widens and distances Christian unity. On the eve of Jesus' passion, the burden of disunity and division among his disciples pierced and tore his heart. «May they be one, just as, Father, you are in me and I am in you, so that they also may be in us, so that the world may believe it was you who sent me» (Jn, 17, 21). Accordingly, the disunity among Christians is perhaps the greatest counter-testimony to the message of the Gospel. This is not only a counter-witness but also contradicts the Christian vocation of reconciliation. «It is all God's work; he reconciled us to himself through Christ and gave us the ministry of reconciliation. So we are ambassadors for Christ (1 Cor. 5, 18-20)».

Furthermore, the unity among Christians is of paramount importance, prior to speaking of interreligious harmony. Therefore, the document invites all Christians to a conversion, *metanoia*, a change of heart, a new mentality. Moreover, the ecumenical cooperation, dialogue and common witness boost the interreligious dialogue. As the Directory on Ecumenism (DE) 1993, highlights «Christians cannot close their hearts to the crying needs of our contemporary world. The contribution they are able to make to all areas of human life in which the need for salvation is manifested will be more effective when they make it together, and when they are seen to be united in making it» (DE n.162).

In this context, the document is a watershed in the ecumenical dialogue. Representatives of 90% of the world Christian population have formulated an ecu-

menical missionary approach to witness to the world. Its success depends on how respective churches and ecclesial communities implement its recommendations for Christian mission worldwide. The different initiatives by Christians reveal the impact the document has made on Christian churches and ecclesial communities. Yet, as Pope Benedict XVI notes, the growth of communion among Christians needs to lead to a far deeper level of unity. "The search for the re-establishment of unity among the divided Christians cannot therefore be reduced to recognition of the reciprocal differences and the achievement of a peaceful coexistence: what we yearn for that unity for which Christ himself prayed and which, by its nature is expressed in the communion of faith, of sacraments, of the ministry".[5] Towards the path to a new spirit of ecumenism, the document renders a yeomen service.

2. New Mission Theology for Dialogue

The document also gives birth to a new ecumenical theology of mission. Today, mission is understood as a complex reality which can roughly be unravelled into six operative elements: (i). witness and proclamation; (ii). liturgy, prayer and contemplation; (iii). justice, peace, and the integrity of creation; (iv). dialogue with women and men of other faiths and ideologies; (v). inculturation; and (vi). reconciliation. How would Christ behave and what would he teach if he were born in a religiously plural society today? The *Recommendations for Conduct* is a continuing reminder of the importance to live as Jesus would live if he were here today. Besides, the mission of the Church makes Christ's incarnation possible. Mission makes it possible for Christ to be reborn again and again in every time and place. The church is missionary by its very nature (AG, no. 2). It becomes missionary by attending to its every context in which it finds itself. In other words, if Christianity is to be meaningful and relevant, it must address the issues affecting its life (church) and the lives of the people (whole humanity). The *Recommendations for conduct* invite Christians to imitate Jesus Christ in all aspects of life who calls us to love our neighbour as ourselves. Thereby, it seeks to overcome the impression that "religions today, fight among themselves and not against Satan and Mammon". The principles and recommendations of the document give the impression that conversion is seen in a broader sense namely as turning away primarily from evil powers of Satan even thought it assures the freedom of religion and belief inclusive of change of one's religion. Moreover, the missionary approach of the document, seeks to nurture the seed of Word and the seed of the Reign of

[5] Pope Benedict XVI, "Homily at the end of the week of Prayer", 25 January 2011.

God present among all the people of God rather than trying to uproot and reroute them by spreading the seeds of silly divisions and petty disputes in the name of God and his mission. Thus, mission does not become a *counter*-mission or mission *against*, rather mission *with* and mission *for*.

3. "Recommendations for Conduct" and New Humanism

If implemented rightly, the "*Recommendations for Conduct*" certainly will pave the way for new ecumenical and interreligious relationships and thereby contribute to the dawn of new humanism. This is the need of the hour in our troubled world. Addressing the delegates of the International Jewish Committee on Interreligious Consultations, Pope Benedict XVI notes that interreligious dialogue is becoming more and more a sacred duty today.

"In our troubled world, so frequently marked by poverty, violence and exploitation, dialogue between cultures and religions must more and more be seen as a sacred duty incumbent upon all those who are committed to building a world worthy of man. […] The ability to accept and respect one another, and to speak the truth in love, is essential for overcoming differences, preventing misunderstandings and avoiding needless confrontations. […] A sincere dialogue needs both openness and a firm sense of identity on both sides, in order for each to be enriched by the gifts of the other." [6]

Instead of aggressive and provocative evangelisation and a fanatic conversion drive, this sacred duty invites Christians to collaborate with *missio Dei* in converting the whole of humanity and the unjust structures, which belittle the dignity of the human person created in God's own image and redeemed by Jesus Christ. Moreover, this sacred duty convinces the Christians to work towards restoring peace and harmony among all nations until the full realization of the reign of God with the second coming of Lord Jesus. The world transforming mission motivates the Christians to enter into dialogue and cooperation with brothers and sisters of other religions on converging core principles and ideals or spiritual patrimony. "All of us believe that religions should be a source of uniting and ennobling of humans. Religion understood and practiced in the light of the core principles and ideals of each of our faiths can be a reliable guide to meeting the many challenges before humankind".[7] Thus, the future of humanity depends on

[6] http://www.vatican.va/holy_father/benedict_xvi/speeches/2008/october.

[7] Report from the Interreligious Consultation on "Conversion - Assessing the Reality" 2006, *Pro Dialogo Bulletin*, 122 (2006/2), p. 212, n.1.

new humanism built on dialogue which is a sacred duty and a vital necessity. Pope Benedict XVI states that "Interreligious and intercultural dialogue [...] cannot be reduced to an optional extra. It is in fact a vital necessity, on which in large measure our future depends".[8]

Conclusion

Many countries in the world, especially in Asia, are struggling to cope with the conversion issue today. Furthermore, many countries are also devastated by poverty, conflicts and violence including even religions, ecological problems, threats to the sacredness of life, etc. The Message of Pope Benedict XVI for the celebration of the World of Peace, 1 January 2009 entitled "Fighting poverty to build peace" situates the social problem of poverty in a wider context, namely globalization. Besides, he analyses the link between poverty and conflicts and shows how as a vicious cycle, "these conflicts fuel further tragic situations of poverty" (n. 1). He thus identifies poverty as one of the grave threats to peace in the modern world. "The gap between the rich and the poor has become more marked, even in the most economically developed nations" (n.1). The Message of Pope Benedict XVI for the celebration of the World day of Peace, 1 January 2010, ***If you want to cultivate peace, protect creation***, stresses that the preservation of creation now become essential for the pacific coexistence of mankind. "Man's inhumanity to man has given rise to numerous threats to peace and to authentic and integral human development – wars, international and regional conflicts, acts of terrorism, and violations of human rights. Yet no less troubling are the threats arising from the neglect – if not downright misuse – of the earth and the natural goods that God has given us" (n. 1). The Message of Pope Benedict XVI for the celebration of the World day of Peace, 1 January 2011, ***"Religious freedom, the path to peace"*** highlights that "the right to religious freedom is rooted in the very dignity of the human person, whose transcendent nature must not be ignored or overlooked" (n. 2). Moreover, "Fanaticism, fundamentalism and practices contrary to human dignity can never be justified, even less so in the name of religion" (n. 7).

We must not yield to pressure and pessimism rather we must cultivate optimism and hope. It is our duty to continue with zeal, the dialogue of charity on the basis of the spiritual patrimony without diluting and relativising our identity. For today's world, afflicted by many maladies, as Pope Benedict XVI notes, interreli-

[8] Pope Benedict XVI, "Address to the representatives of some Muslim communities on the occasion of World Youth Day in Cologne", Saturday, 20 August 2005.

gious and ecumenical dialogue are "a sacred duty" and "a vital necessity". "Christian Witness in a Multi-religious World: Recommendations for Conduct" presents an ethical foundation to overcome the conversion issue as well as others and to build a civilization of love. It is not a utopia but a sacred duty of all peace-loving people to implement its recommendations for a better tomorrow. Submitting ourselves to the communion of the Trinitarian God, let us serve ecumenically and interreligiously the common good.

The Second Seminar of the Catholic-Muslim Forum Hosted by The Royal Aal Al-Bayt Institute For Islamic Thought

Reason, Faith and the Human Person

Baptism Site of Jesus Christ, Jordan, 21-23 November 2011

Final Declaration

By the grace of God, the second seminar of the Catholic-Muslim Forum was hosted by the Royal Aal al-Bayt Institute for Islamic Thought and held at the Baptism Site of Jesus Christ in Jordan, from the 21st to 23rd of November, 2011 CE. Twenty-four Catholic and twenty-four Muslim religious leaders, scholars, and educators met in a respectful and friendly atmosphere. The forum participants, in continuation of the first Catholic-Muslim Seminar held in Rome in 2008, discussed together the theme: Reason, Faith and the Human Person. The participants were honored to call upon His Majesty King Abdullah II at Basman Palace on the 22nd of November, shared with him some matters of current concern to Catholics and Muslims, and received his encouragement and insight.

The participants agreed upon the following:

1. God has endowed human beings with reason through which to recognize the truth. Recognition of the truth illuminates our responsibilities before God and to one another.

2. Faith is a gift of God through which human beings discover that they are created by God and grow in their knowledge of Him.

3. The pure heart is the center of the faithful person, where faith, reason and compassion meet in adoration of God and love of neighbour.

4. The God-given dignity of human beings must be respected by all and protected in law.

5. In dialogue, believers must express their gratitude to God for all these gifts with mutual respect and compassion, and in a form of life in harmony with God's creation.

Catholics and Muslims look forward to continuing their dialogue as a way of furthering mutual understanding, and advancing the common good of all humanity, especially its yearning for peace, justice and solidarity.

DAY OF REFLECTION, DIALOGUE AND PRAYER FOR PEACE AND JUSTICE IN THE WORLD
"PILGRIMS OF TRUTH, PILGRIMS OF PEACE"

ASSISI, 27 OCTOBER 2011

REPORT

As did John Paul II on 27 October 1986, who personally invited all the religions of the world to a Day of Prayer for Peace in Assisi, Pope Benedict XVI brought together representatives not only of Christian Churches, but also persons representing many of the world's other religions.

This Bulletin includes the translation in English of the following: the different interventions by Pope Benedict concerning this event; the list of the representatives of Christian churches and of the other world religions; a list of the international organizations for interreligious dialogue; the list of the non-believers; the programme of the Day; the texts of the testimonies offered by the different religious traditions in the Basilica of Saint Mary of the Angels; and the introduction there by Cardinal Peter Kodwo Appiah Turkson, President of the Pontifical Council for Justice and Peace.

Also included are: the text of the Pledge for Peace; the introduction given by Cardinal Jean-Louis Tauran, President of the Pontifical Council for Interreligious Dialogue; and the closing address by Cardinal Kurt Koch, President of the Pontifical Council for Promoting Christian Unity, marking the Exchange of the Sign of Peace among the Delegates in the Lower Piazza Basilica of St. Francis.

Finally, we present the two Holy See Press Office - Press Reports concerning this event.

1st January, Solemnity of Mary, Mother of God, 44th World Day of Peace

Pope's Announcement in St Peter's Square - Angelus[1]

Dear Brothers and Sisters,

In this first Angelus of 2011, I offer everyone my good wishes for peace and well-being as I entrust them to Mary Most Holy, whom we celebrate today as Mother of God. At the beginning of a new year the Christian people gathers in spirit at the Grotto in Bethlehem, where the Virgin Mary gave birth to Jesus.

We ask the Mother for her Blessing and she blesses us by showing us the Son: indeed, he in person, is the Blessing. In giving us Jesus God has given us everything: his love, his life, the light of truth, the forgiveness of sins; he has given us peace. Yes, Jesus Christ is our peace (*cf.* Eph 2:14). He brought into the world the seed of love and peace, that is stronger than the seed of hatred and violence; stronger, because the Name of Jesus is superior to any other name, it contains the whole Lordship of God, as the Prophet Micah announced: "But you, O Bethlehem... from you shall come forth for me one who is to be ruler.... He shall stand and feed his flock in the strength of the Lord, in the majesty of the name of the Lord his God.... And this shall be peace" (5:1-4).

This is why on this day, in front of the icon of the Virgin Mother, the Church invokes from God, through Jesus Christ, the gift of peace: the World Day of Peace is a favourable opportunity to reflect together on the great challenges our epoch confronts humanity with.

One such is religious freedom, dramatically urgent in our day. For this reason, this year I have chosen to dedicate my Message to the theme: "*Religious freedom, the path to peace*".

Today we are witnessing two opposing trends, two extremes, both negative: on the one hand secularism, which marginalizes religion in order to confine it to the private sphere; and on the other, fundamentalism which, on the contrary, would like to impose it upon everyone by force.

In reality, "God beckons humanity with a loving plan that, while engaging the whole person in his or her natural and spiritual dimensions, calls for a free and

[1] For full text and translations, see: http://www.vatican.va/holy_father/benedict_xvi/angelus/2011/documents/hf_ben-xvi_ang_20110101_world-day-peace_en.html

responsible answer which engages the whole heart and being, individual and communitarian" (*Message for the World Day of Peace 2011*, n. 8).

Wherever religious freedom is effectively acknowledged the dignity of the human person is respected at its root, and through a sincere search for the true and the good, the moral conscience and the institutions and civil coexistence themselves are strengthened (*cf. ibid.*, n. 5). Religious freedom is therefore a privileged path for building peace.

After the Angelus

Dear brothers and sisters, in my *Message for today's World Day of Peace* I have had the opportunity to emphasize that the great religions can constitute an important factor of unity and peace for the human family. In this regard, moreover, I recalled that this year, 2011, is the 25th anniversary of the World Day of Prayer for Peace which Venerable John Paul II convoked in Assisi in 1986.

Therefore next October I shall go as a pilgrim to the town of St Francis, inviting my Christian brethren of various denominations, the exponents of the world's religious traditions to join this Pilgrimage and ideally all men and women of good will. It will aim to commemorate the historical action desired by my Predecessor and to solemnly renew the commitment of believers of every religion to live their own religious faith as a service to the cause of peace.

Those journeying to God cannot but transmit peace, those who are building peace cannot but draw close to God. I ask you, from this moment, to accompany this project with your prayers.

23 October

Angelus in Saint Peter's Square[2]

Dear Brothers and Sisters,

Let us turn in prayer to the Virgin Mary, who guides the disciples of Christ on the path of holiness. To her intercession we entrust the Day of reflection, dialogue and prayer for peace and justice in the world: a pilgrimage to Assisi, 25 years after that convoked by Bl. John Paul II.

[2] For full text and translations, see: http://www.vatican.va/holy_father/benedict_xvi/angelus/2011/documents/hf_ben-xvi_ang_20111023_en.html

Prayer in preparation of the Meeting[3]

Dear Brothers and Sisters,

Today the usual appointment of the General Audience assumes a special character, because we are on the eve of the *Day of Reflection, Dialogue and Prayer for Peace and Justice in the World*, which will take place tomorrow in Assisi, 25 years after the first historic meeting Blessed John Paul II convened. I chose to give this Day the name of "Pilgrims of truth, pilgrims of peace", to stress the commitment that we desire to solemnly renew, together with the members of different religions, and also with men and women, non-believers who sincerely search for the truth, in promoting the authentic good of humanity and in building peace. As I have already mentioned, "Whoever is on the path to God cannot but transmit peace, whoever builds peace cannot but come closer to God".

As Christians, we believe that the most precious contribution we can make to the cause of peace is that of prayer. That is why we are here today, as the Church of Rome, together with the pilgrims who have come to the City, to listen to the word of God, to invoke with faith the gift of peace. The Lord can enlighten our minds and hearts and guide us to be builders of justice and reconciliation in our daily lives and in the world.

In the passage from the Prophet Zechariah that we just listened to, a proclamation full of hope and light resounds (cf. 9:10). God promises salvation, he invites us to "rejoice greatly" because this salvation is coming true. He speaks of a King: "Lo, your king comes to you; triumphant and victorious is he" (v. 9), but the one who is announced is not a king invested with human power, the force of arms; he is not a king who dominates by political or military might; he is a gentle king, who reigns with humility and meekness before God and men, a king different from the great sovereigns of the world: "riding on an ass, on a colt the foal of an ass", says the Prophet (*ibid.*). He appears mounted on the animal of the common man, of the poor, as opposed to the war chariots of the hosts of the earth's powerful. Indeed, he is a king who will cut off these chariots of war, break the bow of battle, command peace to the nations (cf. v. 10).

But who is this king of whom the Prophet Zechariah speaks? Let us go for a moment to Bethlehem and listen again to what the Angel says to the shepherds who keep watch in the night guarding their flock. The Angel announces to them

[3] For full text and translations, see: http://www.vatican.va/holy_father/benedict_xvi/audiences/2011/documents/hf_ben-xvi_aud_20111026_en.html

a great joy which will come to all the people, tied to a humble sign: a babe wrapped in swaddling clothes and lying in a manger (cf. Lk 2:8-12). And a multitude of the heavenly host sings "Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace among men with whom he is pleased" (v. 14), to people of good will. The birth of that babe, who is Jesus, brings a proclamation of peace for the whole world. But let us now go to the final moments of Christ's life, when he enters Jerusalem greeted by a cheering crowd. The Prophet Zechariah's message of the coming of a humble and meek king comes back to mind of Jesus' disciples in a special way after the events of the passion, death and resurrection, of the Paschal Mystery, when they look with the eyes of faith to that joyful entry of their Master into the Holy City. He rides a borrowed ass (cf. Mt 21:2-7): he is not in a rich carriage, not on a horse like the great ones. He does not enter Jerusalem accompanied by a powerful host of chariots and horsemen. He is a poor king, the king of those who are the poor people of God. In the Greek text the word ***praeis*** appears, meaning the meek, the mild; Jesus is the king of the ***anawim***, of those whose hearts are free from the longing for power and material riches, the desire and quest for domination over others. Jesus is the king of those who have that interior freedom that makes one capable of overcoming greed, the selfishness that is in the world, and know that God alone is their wealth.

Jesus is the poor king among the poor, meek among those who desire to be meek. In this way he is the king of peace, thanks to the power of God, who is the power of goodness, the power of love. He is a king who cuts off the chariots and war horses, who breaks the bows of war; a king who realizes peace on the Cross, joining earth and heaven and building a bridge of brotherly love among all people. The Cross is the new ***bow of peace***, the sign and the instrument of reconciliation, of forgiveness, of understanding, the sign that love is stronger than any violence and oppression, stronger than death: evil is conquered by good, by love.

This is the new kingdom of peace of which Christ is king; and it is a kingdom that encompasses the whole earth. The Prophet Zechariah announces that this meek king, a peaceful one, shall rule "from sea to sea, and from the River to the ends of the earth" (Zech 9:10). The kingdom that Christ inaugurates has universal dimensions. The horizon of this poor meek king, is not that of a territory, of a State, but the ends of the world; beyond every barrier of race, language, culture, he creates a communion. He creates unity. And where do we see this message being realized today? In the great network of Eucharistic communities that covers the whole of the earth, Zechariah's shining prophecy surfaces anew. It is a vast mosaic of communities in which this gentle and peaceful king's sacrifice of love is made present; it is a vast mosaic which constitutes the "Kingdom of peace" of Jesus from sea to sea to the ends of the earth; it is a multitude of "islands of peace",

radiating peace. Everywhere, in every situation, in every culture, from big cities with their sky-scrapers to little villages with their humble dwellings, from massive cathedrals to small chapels, he comes, he makes himself present; and by entering into communion with him men too are united among themselves in one single body, overcoming division, rivalry, grudges. The Lord comes in the Eucharist to take us out of our individualism, away from our particularities that exclude others, in order to form us into one single body, one single kingdom of peace in a divided world.

But how can we build this kingdom of peace in which Christ is king? The commandment which he leaves his Apostles and, through them, each of us is: "Go therefore and make disciples of all nations... and lo, I am with you always, to the close of the age" (Mt 28:19). Like Jesus, the messengers of peace of his kingdom must set out, they must respond to his invitation. They must go, but not with the might of war or the force of power. In the Gospel passage that we listened to Jesus sends 70 disciples out into the great harvest, which is the world, inviting them to pray the Lord of the harvest that there may be no lack of labourers in his harvest (cf. Lk 10:1-3); but he does not send them with powerful means, but "as lambs in the midst of wolves" (v. 3), without purse, bag, or sandals (cf. v. 4). St John Chrysostom, in one of his homilies, comments: "For so long as we are sheep, we conquer: though ten thousand wolves prowl around, we overcome and prevail. But if we become wolves, we are worsted, for the help of our Shepherd departs from us" (*Homily* 33, 1: PG 57, 389). Christians must never yield to the temptation to become wolves among wolves; it is not with might, with force, with violence that Christ's kingdom of peace grows, but with the gift of self, with love carried to the extreme, even towards enemies. Jesus does not conquer the world with the force of arms, but with the force of the Cross, which is the true guarantee of victory. The consequence of this for those who want to be disciples of the Lord, his envoys, is to be prepared for the passion and martyrdom, to lose their own life for him, so that in the world goodness, love and peace may triumph. This is the prerequisite needed to say, upon entering into every situation: "Peace be to this house" (Lk 10:5).

In front of St Peter's Basilica, these are two large statues of Sts Peter and Paul, easily identifiable: St Peter holds in his hand the keys, St Paul holds in his hands a sword. Those unfamiliar with the history of the latter might think that this was a great leader who led powerful armies and subdued peoples and nations by the sword, obtaining fame and wealth for himself by the blood of others. Instead it is exactly the opposite: the sword held between his hands is the instrument by which Paul was put to death, with which he was martyred and that shed his blood. His battle was not one of violence, of war, but that of martyrdom for Christ. His only weapon was the message: "Jesus Christ and him crucified" (1 Cor 2:2). And his

preaching was not based on "plausible words of wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit and power" (v. 4). He dedicated his life to spreading the Gospel message of reconciliation and peace, spending all of his energy to make it vibrant to the ends of the earth. And this was his strength: he did not seek a tranquil, comfortable life, free from hardships, from opposition, but was consumed by the Gospel, he gave himself unreservedly, and so became the great messenger of Christ's peace and reconciliation. The sword that St Paul holds in his hands is a reminder, too, of the power of truth, that can often wound, it can hurt; the Apostle remained faithful to this truth to the end. He served it, suffered for it, he gave up his life for it. This same logic holds true also for us, if we want to be bearers of the kingdom of peace proclaimed by the Prophet Zechariah and fulfilled by Christ: we must be willing to pay in person, to suffer misunderstanding, rejection, persecution in the first person. It is not the sword of the conqueror that builds peace, but the sword of the suffering, of whoever gives up his/her own life.

Dear brothers and sisters, as Christians let us ask God for the gift of peace, let us pray to him that he may make us instruments of his peace in a world still torn by hatred, by divisions, by selfishness, by war. Let us ask him that the meeting tomorrow in Assisi may encourage dialogue between people of different religious confessions and bring a ray of light capable of illuminating the minds and hearts of all men, so that bitterness may give way to forgiveness, division to reconciliation, hatred to love, violence to gentleness, and that peace may reign in the world. Amen.

Before the end of the General Audience, the Holy Father stopped for a moment in St Peter's Basilica to greet the pilgrims gathered as there was not enough space in the Paul VI Audience Hall.

I am pleased to receive you in Saint Peter's Basilica and to extend a warm welcome to all of you who could not be accommodated in the Audience Hall. Always stay faithfully united to Christ and bear joyful witness to the Gospel. To all of you I cordially impart my Blessing.

The Pope then returned to the Paul VI Audience Hall, where the celebration took place and where then he made an appeal and greeted the various language groups.

Dear brothers and sisters, before greeting you in the different languages, I will start by making an Appeal. In this time, my thoughts go out to the peoples of Turkey severely hit by an earthquake, causing a grave loss of human life, many missing and extensive damage. I invite you all to join me in prayer for those who have lost their lives and to be spiritually close to the many people so harshly tried.

May the Most High sustain those engaged in relief efforts. And now I shall greet you in the different languages.

To special groups

I am happy to welcome all the English-speaking pilgrims and visitors here today. I ask you to accompany me in prayer as I journey tomorrow to Assisi for the celebration of the *Day of Reflection, Dialogue and Prayer for Peace and Justice in the World,* together with representatives of different religions. I extend special greetings to the pilgrims from the Diocese of Niigata in Japan celebrating their centenary. I also welcome those present from England, Denmark, Indonesia, the Philippines, South Korea, Vietnam and the United States. May Almighty God bless all of you!

Lastly I greet the *young people*, the *sick* and the *newlyweds*. May the example of St Francis of Assisi, at whose tomb we will pray tomorrow, sustain you, dear *young people*, in your commitment of daily fidelity to Christ; encourage you, dear *sick people*, always to follow Jesus on the path of trial and suffering; help you, dear *newlyweds*, to make your family a place of constant encounter with the love of God and of neighbour. Thank you all. Good day.

27 October 2011

Pope's opening address in the Basilica of Saint Mary of the Angels, Assisi[4]

Dear Brothers and Sisters,

Distinguished Heads and Representatives of Churches, Ecclesial Communities and World Religions,

Dear Friends,

Twenty-five years have passed since Blessed Pope John Paul II first invited representatives of the world's religions to Assisi to pray for peace. What has happened in the meantime? What is the state of play with regard to peace today? At that time the great threat to world peace came from the division of the earth into

[4] For full text and translations, see:http://www.vatican.va/holy_father/benedict_xvi/speeches/2011/october/documents/hf_ben-xvi_spe_20111027_assisi_en.html

two mutually opposed blocs. A conspicuous symbol of this division was the Berlin Wall which traced the border between two worlds right through the heart of the city. In 1989, three years after Assisi, the wall came down, without bloodshed. Suddenly the vast arsenals that stood behind the wall were no longer significant. They had lost their terror. The peoples' will to freedom was stronger than the arsenals of violence. The question as to the causes of this dramatic change is complex and cannot be answered with simple formulae. But in addition to economic and political factors, the deepest reason for the event is a spiritual one: behind material might there were no longer any spiritual convictions. The will to freedom was ultimately stronger than the fear of violence, which now lacked any spiritual veneer. For this victory of freedom, which was also, above all, a victory of peace, we give thanks. What is more, this was not merely, nor even primarily, about the freedom to believe, although it did include this. To that extent we may in some way link all this to our prayer for peace.

But what happened next? Unfortunately, we cannot say that freedom and peace have characterized the situation ever since. Even if there is no threat of a great war hanging over us at present, nevertheless the world is unfortunately full of discord. It is not only that sporadic wars are continually being fought – violence as such is potentially ever present and it is a characteristic feature of our world. Freedom is a great good. But the world of freedom has proved to be largely directionless, and not a few have misinterpreted freedom as somehow including freedom for violence. Discord has taken on new and frightening guises, and the struggle for freedom must engage us all in a new way.

Let us try to identify the new faces of violence and discord more closely. It seems to me that, in broad strokes, we may distinguish two types of the new forms of violence, which are the very antithesis of each other in terms of their motivation and manifest a number of differences in detail. Firstly there is terrorism, for which in place of a great war there are targeted attacks intended to strike the opponent destructively at key points, with no regard for the lives of innocent human beings, who are cruelly killed or wounded in the process. In the eyes of the perpetrators, the overriding goal of damage to the enemy justifies any form of cruelty. Everything that had been commonly recognized and sanctioned in international law as the limit of violence is overruled. We know that terrorism is often religiously motivated and that the specifically religious character of the attacks is proposed as a justification for the reckless cruelty that considers itself entitled to discard the rules of morality for the sake of the intended "good". In this case, religion does not serve peace, but is used as justification for violence.

The post-Enlightenment critique of religion has repeatedly maintained that religion is a cause of violence and in this way it has fuelled hostility towards religions. The fact that, in the case we are considering here, religion really does moti-

vate violence should be profoundly disturbing to us as religious persons. In a way that is more subtle but no less cruel, we also see religion as the cause of violence when force is used by the defenders of one religion against others. The religious delegates who were assembled in Assisi in 1986 wanted to say, and we now repeat it emphatically and firmly: this is not the true nature of religion. It is the antithesis of religion and contributes to its destruction. In response, an objection is raised: how do you know what the true nature of religion is? Does your assertion not derive from the fact that your religion has become a spent force? Others in their turn will object: is there such a thing as a common nature of religion that finds expression in all religions and is therefore applicable to them all? We must ask ourselves these questions, if we wish to argue realistically and credibly against religiously motivated violence. Herein lies a fundamental task for interreligious dialogue – an exercise which is to receive renewed emphasis through this meeting. As a Christian I want to say at this point: yes, it is true, in the course of history, force has also been used in the name of the Christian faith. We acknowledge it with great shame. But it is utterly clear that this was an abuse of the Christian faith, one that evidently contradicts its true nature. The God in whom we Christians believe is the Creator and Father of all, and from him all people are brothers and sisters and form one single family. For us the Cross of Christ is the sign of the God who put "suffering-with" (compassion) and "loving-with" in place of force. His name is "God of love and peace" (*2 Cor* 13:11). It is the task of all who bear responsibility for the Christian faith to purify the religion of Christians again and again from its very heart, so that it truly serves as an instrument of God's peace in the world, despite the fallibility of humans.

If one basic type of violence today is religiously motivated and thus confronts religions with the question as to their true nature and obliges all of us to undergo purification, a second complex type of violence is motivated in precisely the opposite way: as a result of God's absence, his denial and the loss of humanity which goes hand in hand with it. The enemies of religion – as we said earlier – see in religion one of the principal sources of violence in the history of humanity and thus they demand that it disappear. But the denial of God has led to much cruelty and to a degree of violence that knows no bounds, which only becomes possible when man no longer recognizes any criterion or any judge above himself, now having only himself to take as a criterion. The horrors of the concentration camps reveal with utter clarity the consequences of God's absence.

Yet I do not intend to speak further here about state-imposed atheism, but rather about the decline of man, which is accompanied by a change in the spiritual climate that occurs imperceptibly and hence is all the more dangerous. The worship of mammon, possessions and power is proving to be a counter-religion, in which it is no longer man who counts but only personal advantage. The desire

for happiness degenerates, for example, into an unbridled, inhuman craving, such as appears in the different forms of drug dependency. There are the powerful who trade in drugs and then the many who are seduced and destroyed by them, physically and spiritually. Force comes to be taken for granted and in parts of the world it threatens to destroy our young people. Because force is taken for granted, peace is destroyed and man destroys himself in this peace vacuum.

The absence of God leads to the decline of man and of humanity. But where is God? Do we know him, and can we show him anew to humanity, in order to build true peace? Let us first briefly summarize our considerations thus far. I said that there is a way of understanding and using religion so that it becomes a source of violence, while the rightly lived relationship of man to God is a force for peace. In this context I referred to the need for dialogue and I spoke of the constant need for purification of lived religion. On the other hand I said that the denial of God corrupts man, robs him of his criteria and leads him to violence.

In addition to the two phenomena of religion and anti-religion, a further basic orientation is found in the growing world of agnosticism: people to whom the gift of faith has not been given, but who are nevertheless on the lookout for truth, searching for God. Such people do not simply assert: "There is no God". They suffer from his absence and yet are inwardly making their way towards him, inasmuch as they seek truth and goodness. They are "pilgrims of truth, pilgrims of peace". They ask questions of both sides. They take away from militant atheists the false certainty by which these claim to know that there is no God and they invite them to leave polemics aside and to become seekers who do not give up hope in the existence of truth and in the possibility and necessity of living by it. But they also challenge the followers of religions not to consider God as their own property, as if he belonged to them, in such a way that they feel vindicated in using force against others. These people are seeking the truth, they are seeking the true God, whose image is frequently concealed in the religions because of the ways in which they are often practised. Their inability to find God is partly the responsibility of believers with a limited or even falsified image of God. So all their struggling and questioning is in part an appeal to believers to purify their faith, so that God, the true God, becomes accessible. Therefore I have consciously invited delegates of this third group to our meeting in Assisi, which does not simply bring together representatives of religious institutions. Rather it is a case of being together on a journey towards truth, a case of taking a decisive stand for human dignity and a case of common engagement for peace against every form of destructive force. Finally I would like to assure you that the Catholic Church will not let up in her fight against violence, in her commitment for peace in the world. We are animated by the common desire to be "pilgrims of truth, pilgrims of peace".

Assisi, Saint Francis Square, 27 October

Pope's Pledge for Peace

Violence never again!
War never again!
Terrorism never again!
In the name of God,
may every religion
bring upon the earth
Justice and Peace
Forgiveness and Life,
Love!

27 October

Pope's Farewell address in Saint Francis Square, Assisi[5]

Distinguished guests,

Dear friends,

At the conclusion of this intense day, I wish to thank all of you. Deep gratitude goes to those who have made possible today's meeting. We especially thank those who hosted us: the city of Assisi, the community of this Diocese with its Bishop and the sons of St Francis, who guard the precious spiritual legacy of the *Poverello* of Assisi. I would like to also thank the many young people who have made the pilgrimage on foot from Santa Maria degli Angeli to testify that, among the new generations, there are many who work to overcome violence and division, and to be promoters of justice and peace.

Today's event is an image of how the spiritual dimension is a key element in the building of peace. Through this unique pilgrimage we have been able to engage in fraternal dialogue, to deepen our friendship, and to come together in silence and prayer.

After renewing our commitment to peace and exchanging with one another a sign of peace, we feel even more profoundly involved, together with all the men

[5] For full text and translations, see: http://www.vatican.va/holy_father/benedict_xvi/speeches/2011/october/documents/hf_ben-xvi_spe_20111027_assisi-congedo_en.html

and women from the communities that we represent, in our common human journey.

We are not being separated; we will continue to meet, we will continue to be united in this journey, in dialogue, in the daily building of peace and in our commitment to a better world, a world in which every man and woman and every people can live in accordance with their own legitimate aspirations.

From my heart I thank all of you here present for having accepted my invitation to come to Assisi as pilgrims of truth and peace and I greet each one of you in Saint Francis' own words: May the Lord grant you peace – "il Signore ti dia pace".

Clementine Hall, the Vatican, 28 October

Address to the Delegations taking part in the Meeting for Peace in Assisi[6]

Distinguished Guests,
Dear Friends,

I welcome you this morning to the Apostolic Palace and I thank you once more for your willingness to take part in the day of reflection, dialogue and prayer for justice and peace in the world held yesterday in Assisi, twenty-five years after that historic first meeting.

In a certain sense, this gathering is representative of the billions of men and women throughout our world who are actively engaged in promoting justice and peace. It is also a sign of the friendship and fraternity which has flourished as the fruit of the efforts of so many pioneers in this kind of dialogue. May this friendship continue to grow among all the followers of the world's religions and with men and women of good will everywhere.

I thank my Christian brothers and sisters for their fraternal presence. I also thank the representatives of the Jewish people, who are particularly close to us, and all of you, the distinguished representatives of the world's religions. I am aware that many of you have come from afar and have undertaken a demanding journey. I express my gratitude also to those who represent people of good will who follow no religious tradition but are committed to the search for truth. They have been

[6] For full text and translations, see: http://www.vatican.va/holy_father/benedict_xvi/speeches/2011/october/documents/hf_ben-xvi_spe_20111028_religious-delegations_en.html

willing to share this pilgrimage with us as a sign of their desire to work together to build a better world.

Looking back, we can appreciate the foresight of the late Pope John Paul II in convening the first Assisi meeting, and the continuing need for men and women of different religions to testify together that the journey of the spirit is always a journey of peace.

Meetings of this sort are necessarily exceptional and infrequent, yet they are a vivid expression of the fact that every day, throughout our world, people of different religious traditions live and work together in harmony. It is surely significant for the cause of peace that so many men and women, inspired by their deepest convictions, are committed to working for the good of the human family.

In this way, I am sure that yesterday's meeting has given us a sense of how genuine is our desire to contribute to the good of all our fellow human beings and how much we have to share with one another.

As we go our separate ways, let us draw strength from this experience and, wherever we may be, let us continue refreshed on the journey that leads to truth, the pilgrimage that leads to peace. I thank all of you from my heart!

Clementine Hall, The Vatican, 22 December

Pope's Christmas address to the Roman Curia[7]

The key theme of this year, and of the years ahead, is this: how do we proclaim the Gospel today? How can faith as a living force become a reality today? The ecclesial events of the outgoing year were all ultimately related to this theme. There (...) was the important day of encounter in Assisi for religions and for people who in whatever way are searching for truth and peace, representing a new step forward in the pilgrimage towards truth and peace.

It would take too long now to go into detail concerning the encounter in Assisi, as the significance of the event would warrant. Let us simply thank God, that as representatives of the world's religions and as representatives of thinking in search of truth, we were able to meet that day in a climate of friendship and mutual respect, in love for the truth and in shared responsibility for peace. So let us hope that, from this encounter, a new willingness to serve peace, reconciliation and justice has emerged.

[7] For full text and translations, see: http://www.vatican.va/holy_father/benedict_xvi/speeches/2011/december/documents/hf_ben-xvi_spe_20111222_auguri-curia_en.html

Sala Regia, 9 January 2012

Address to the members of the Diplomatic Corps[8]

In the past year religiously motivated terrorism has also reaped numerous victims, especially in Asia and in Africa; for this reason, as I stated in Assisi, religious leaders need to repeat firmly and forcefully that "this is not the true nature of religion. It is the antithesis of religion and contributes to its destruction".[Religion cannot be employed as a pretext for setting aside the rules of justice and of law for the sake of the intended "good".

[8] For full text and translations, see: http://www.vatican.va/holy_father/benedict_xvi/speeches/2012/january/documents/hf_ben-xvi_spe_20120109_diplomatic-corps_en.html

I.

LEADERS OF DELEGATIONS FROM CHRISTIAN CHURCHES, COMMUNIONS AND ORGANIZATIONS

ORTHODOX CHURCHES

THE ECUMENICAL PATRIARCHATE
His Holiness BARTHOLOMEW I
Archbishop of Constantinople, Ecumenical Patriarch

GREEK ORTHODOX PATRIARCHATE OF ALEXANDRIA AND ALL AFRICA
His Eminence SERAPHIM
Archbishop of Zimbabwe and Angola
Head of the Office of International Church Affairs

GREEK ORTHODOX PATRIARCHATE OF ANTIOCH AND ALL THE EAST
His Eminence Archbishop NIPHON
Representative of the Patriarch of Antioch at the Patriarchate of Moscow

PATRIARCHATE OF MOSCOW
His Eminence ALEKSANDR
Metropolitan of Astana and Kazakhstan

UKRAINIAN ORTHODOX CHURCH
His Eminence ALEKSANDR
Archbishop of Pereiaslav-Khmelnitskyy and Vyshnevskyy
President of the Department for Interchurch Relations

EXARCHATE OF BELARUS
His Eminence FILARET
Metropolitan of Minsk and Slutsk, Patriarchal Exarch of Belarus

PATRIARCHATE OF SERBIA
His Grace ANDREJ
Bishop of Remesiana

Patriarchate of Romania
His Eminence JOSEF
Metropolitan of the See of Western and Southern Europe

Orthodox Church of Cyprus
His Excellency PORPHYRIOS
Bishop of Neapolis

Orthodox Church of Poland
Reverend Archimandrite Varsanofius DOROSZKIEWICZ

Orthodox Church of Albania
His Beatitude ANASTAS
Archbishop of Tirana, Durres and All Albania

Syrian Orthodox Patriarchate of Antioch and All the East
His Eminence MAR GREGORIOS YOHANNA IBRAHIM
Metropolitan of Aleppo, Syrian Orthodox Archdiocese

Armenian Apostolic Church Catholicossate of the See of Holy Etchmiadzin
His Eminence Norvan ZAKARYAN
Primate Archbishop of the Armenian Diocese in France

Armenian Apostolic Church Catholicossate of the Holy See of Cilicia
His Eminence Archbishop Oshagan CHOLOYAN
Prelate of the East Coast of the USA

Malankara Orthodox Syrian Church
His Grace MetropolitanTHIMOTHIOS
Diocese of the UK-Europe and Africa

Assyrian Church of the East
His Grace MAR APREM
Metropolitan of India

WORLD CHRISTIAN COMMUNIONS AND ORGANIZATIONS

ANGLICAN COMMUNION
His Grace Dr. Rowan Douglas WILLIAMS
Archbishop of Canterbury
Primate of the Anglican Communion

OLD CATHOLIC BISHOPS' CONFERENCE OF THE UNION OF UTRECHT
Most Reverend Joris VERCAMMEN
President

LUTHERAN WORLD FEDERATION
Most Reverend Dr. Munib A. YOUNAN
President

WORLD COMMUNION OF REFORMED CHURCHES
Reverend Dr. Setri NYOMI
General Secretary

CHURCH OF SCOTLAND
Right Reverend A. David K. ARNOTT
Moderator of the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland

WORLD METHODIST COUNCIL
Bishop Ivan ABRAHAMS
President of the World Methodist Council
Presiding Bishop - Methodist Church in South Africa

CHRISTIAN CHURCH (DISCIPLES OF CHRIST)
Dr. Robert K. WELSH
General Secretary, Disciples Ecumenical Consultative Council

BAPTIST WORLD ALLIANCE
Reverend Dr. John UPTON
President

WORLD CONVENTION OF CHURCHES OF CHRIST
Dr. Gary HOLLOWAY
Executive Director

CHURCH OF THE BRETHREN
Mr Stanley J. NOFFSINGER
General Secretary

MENNONITE WORLD CONFERENCE
Bishop Danisa NDLOVU
President

PENTECOSTAL
Reverend Dr. Cecil M. ROBECK, JR
Co-Chairman of the Catholic- Pentecostal Dialogue

WORLD COUNCIL OF CHURCHES
Reverend Dr. Olav FYKSE TVEIT
General Secretary

WORLD EVANGELICAL ALLIANCE
Reverend Dr. Geoffrey TUNNICLIFFE
Secretary General

SALVATION ARMY
Commissioner Barry SWANSON
Chief of the Staff

II. REPRESENTATIVES OF WORLD RELIGIONS

BAHAISM

National Spiritual Assembly of Bahais
Mr. MERCHANT Ali Kamruddin, Adviser, New Delhi, India

BUDDHISM

Pure Land Buddhist Learning College
Most. Ven. KUNG AM Chin, Australia

Shaolin Temple
Most. Ven. SHI Yongxin, Henan, P.R. C.

Fo Guang Shan
Rev. CHIEN Man (*nun*)
Representative of the Most. Ven. Hsing Yun, Taiwan (R.O.C)

Tibetan Buddhism
Rev. RINPOCHE Samdhong
Representative of H. H. the Dalai Lama, , India

Japanese Buddhist Federation (JBF),
Rev. MATSUI Soeki
Vice-Chief, *Rinzai Zen* e *Obaku Zen*, Japan

Rinzai Zen e *Obaku Zen,*
Most. Ven. MATSUYAMA Daiko, Japan

Jodo-Shinshu Nishi Honwanji
Rev. OHTANI Kojun, Vice-Chief, Japan

Tendai Buddhism
Rev. MORIKAWA Koei, Vice-Chief, Japan

Jogye Order
Most. Ven. JA-SEUNG, President, South Korea

Teravada Buddhism
Most. Ven. TEP VONG, Cambodia

Most. Ven. NAYANISSARA Ashin Sittagu Sayadaw, Myanmar

Rev. RAHULA THERO Kottapitiye, Representative, Sri Lanka

Rev. PHROMMOLEE Phra, Vice-Chief, Thailand

Singapore Buddhist Federation (SBF),
Rev. CHUAN GUAN Shi (LIM), Representative, Singapore

World Fellowship Buddhist (WFB),
Most. Ven. WANNAMETHEE Phan, President, Thailand

Sathira Dhammastan
Rev. STHIRASUTA Mae Chee Sansanee *(nun)*
Founder, Thailand

Jodo-Shu Buddhism
Rev. SATOMI Yoshitsugu, Representative, Japan

Rissho Kosei Kai
Most. Ven. WATANABE Yasutaka, Representative, Japan

CONFUCIANISM

Mr. CHOI Gun Duk, President, *South Korea*

HINDUISM

World Council of Arya Samaj,
Mr. AGNIVESH Swami, Presidente, Nuova Delhi, India

Ramakrishna Mission Centre
Mr. BANESHANANDA Swami, Chief, Frankurt, Germany

Sri Radharaman Mandir
Mr. GOSWAMI Shrivatsa, Cult Minister, Vrindavan, India

Swadhyaya
Mr. TALWALKAR Dhanashree, Chief, Mumbai, India

ISLAM

Islamic Community
Mr. AGA Gazmend, President, Albania

Haut Conseil Islamique
Mr. SMATI Mahfoud, Representative, Algeria

World Bektashi Community
Mr. **BRAHIMAJ** Edmond, Chief, Albania

Directorate of Muslims of the Caucasus
Mr. **PASHAZADE** Sheikh-ul-Islam Allahshukur, President, Azerbaijan

Islamic Foundation
Mr. **AFZAL** Shamim Mohammad, General Director, Bangladesh

Islamic Community
Mr. **KOVAČ** Mirnes, Representative of the Grand Mufti, Bosnia and Herzegovina

Mr. **HADZHI** Mustafa, Grand Mufti, Bulgaria

Comité pour le Dialogue et les Relations Islamiques
Conseil Suprême des Affaires Islamiques
Union Internationale du Dialogue des Cultures et des Religions et de l'Education à la Paix
Mr. **ELSAMMAN** Ali, President, Egypt

Conseil Français du Culte Musulman
Mr. **MOUSSAOUI** Mohammed, President, France

Royal Aal al-Bayt Institute for Islamic Thought
H. E. **BIN MUHAMMAD** Prince Ghazi, President, Jordan

Inspection and Control of al-Iftaa Department (I.C.I.D.)
Mr. **ALSHAER** Basel, Direttore, Jordan

Royal Institute for Inter-Faith Studies
ABU JABER Kamel, Direttore, Jordan

Islamic Culture and Relations Organization
MIRDAMADI Seyedabdolmajid, Representative, Teheran, Iran

International Institute for Islamic Studies
SHOMALI Mohammad, Director, Qom, Iran

International Conference of Islamic Scholars Nahdlatul Ulama
Mr. **HASAN** Nasihin, Executive Director, Indonesia

Muhammadiyah
Mr. SYAMSUDDIN M. Sirajuddin, President, Indonesia

High Sharia Court of Appeal
Mr. NATOUR Ahmad, President, Jerusalem, Israel

Unione delle Comunità ed Organizzazioni Islamiche, (U.Co.I.I.),
Mr. ELZIR Izzeddin, President, Italy

Centro Islamico Culturale d'Italia
Mr. REDOUANE Abdellah, Secretary General, Rome, Italy

World Islamic Call Society
Mr. TANTUSH Mansur, Director, Libya / Italy

Mr. KABALAN Ahmad, First Ja'farite Mufti, Lebanon

Higher Islamic Shiite Council
Mr. JAMMOUL Nazih, General Director, Beirut, Lebanon

Islamic Alawite Council
Mr. ASSI Assad. President, Lebanon

Druze Community
Mr. HALABI Abbas, Representative, Lebanon

Mr. TAOUFIK Ahmad, Representative of H. M. King Mohammed VI, Morocco

Ulama and Mashaikh Council
ZUBAIR ABID Mulana Mohammad, President, Pakistan

Shia Ismaili Nizari Muslim Community
Mr. MAHOMED Nazimudin Ahmad, Agha Khan Representative, Portugal

International Islamic Forum for Dialogue
Mr. AL-RIFAIE Hamid, President, Saudi Arabia

ABDUKADIROV Mukaram, Grand Mufti, Tadjikistan
Al-Khoei Foundation

Islamic Affairs National Administration Centre
Mr. LOHWITHEE Witsarut, Representative, Thailand

Mr. Al-KHOEI Seyed Jawad, Deputy Secretary General, U. K.

Fiqh Council of North America
Mr. SIDDIQI Muzammil, President, U.S.A.

JAINISM

World Fellowship of Religion
Mr. SADHVI Sadhana, President, New Delhi, India

Institute of Jainology
Mr. SANGHRAJKA Harshad, Director, London, U. K.

JUDAISM

Chief Rabbi
Dr. Riccardo DI SEGNI, Chief Rabbi, Rome, Italy

International Jewish Committee on Interreligious Consultations
Ms Betty EHRENBERG, *Vice Chair*

Chief Rabbinate of Israel
Rabbi David ROSEN, *International Director of Interreligious Affairs, AJC*

Appeal of Conscience Foundation
Rabbi Arthur SCHNEIER

B'nai B'rith International
Mr David MICHAELS, *Director of Intercommunal Affairs*

Anti-Defamation League
Rabbi Eric GREENBERG

World Jewish Congress
Dr. Maram STERN, *Deputy Secretary General*

New Religions in Japan

Myochi-kai (Arigatou Foundation)
Mr. MIYAMOTO Keishi, President, Japan

Tenrikyo
Mr. NAGAO Nobuo, Vice Supreme Chief, Japan

Kurozomi-kyo
Mr. KUROZUMI Munemichi, Vice-Chief, Japan

Ennokyo
Mr. FUKATA Mitsuhiro, President, Japan

Sabeism - Mandeism

Sabaean Mandean Community
AL-KHAMISI Musa Gitan, Representative, Italy

Shinto

The Association of Shinto Shrines
Most. Ven. TANAKA Tsunekiyo, President, Japan

Konko Church
Most. Ven. MIYAKE Yoshinobu, General Superior, Japan

Sikhism

Gurdwara Prabandhak Committee
Mr. NEKI Jaswant Singh, Representative, Amritsar, India

World Sikh Council-America Region
Mr. BUTALIA Tarunjit Singh, Secretary General , U.S.A.

Guru Nanak Sewak Jatha
Mr. AHLUWALIA Mohinder Singh, President, Birmingham, U.K.

TAOISM

Hong Kong Taoist Association
TONG Wai Hop, President, Hong Kong

TRADITIONAL RELIGIONS OF AFRICA

IFA Heritage Institute, Oyo
Mr. ABIMBOLA Wande, President, NIGERIA

TRADITIONAL RELIGIONS OF AMERICA

Tekakwitha Conference of Catholic Native Americans
Sr. MITCHELL Kateri, SSA, Executive Director, U.S.A.

TRADITIONAL RELIGIONS OF INDIA

Akhil Bhartiya Adivasi Mahasabha
Mr. BIRUA Mukesh, India

ZOROASTRIANISM (Parseeism)

World Zarthushti
Mr. DHALLA Homi Burjor, President, Mumbai, India

III.
INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS FOR INTERRELIGIOUS DIALOGUE

The World Conference of Religions for Peace
Mr. VENDLEY William, Secretary General, New York, U.S.A.

IV.
NON BELIEVERS

Mr. **BAIER** Walter, politician. Austria

Mr. **BODEI** Remo, philosopher, Italy

Mr. **HURTADO** Guillermo, philosopher, Mexico

Mrs. **KRISTEVA** Julia, linguist, psychoanalyst, philosopher, France

DAY OF REFLECTION, DIALOGUE AND PRAYER FOR PEACE AND JUSTICE IN THE WORLD "*PILGRIMS OF TRUTH, PILGRIMS OF PEACE*"

Programme

THURSDAY 27 OCTOBER 2011

07:00 The Members of the Delegations are collected from their respective lodgings and accompanied to the Vatican Railway Station.

07:30 The participants board the train and take their seats as indicated.

07:50 The Holy Father arrives by car at the Vatican Railway Station. Before boarding the train he is received by:

- The Honourable Altero Matteoli, *Minister for Transport;*
- Mr Mauro Moretti, *Administrator Delegate of the Italian State Railways;*
- Professor Lamberto Cardía, *President of the Italian State Railways.*

08:00 The train leaves the Vatican Railway Station.

09:55 The train arrives at the Railway Station *Santa Maria degli Angeli in Assisi*. The Holy Father is received by the following persons:

1. The Most Reverend Domenico Sorrentino, *Archbishop- Bishop of Assisi-Nocera Umbra-Gualdo Tadino;*
2. Dr. Gianni Letta, *Under-Secretary to the Presidency of the Council of Ministers, A representative of the Italian Government;*
3. His Excellency Mr Francesco Maria Greco, *Ambassador of Italy to the Holy See;*
4. Mrs. Catiuscia Marini, *President of the Region of Umbria;*
5. Dr Enrico Laudanna, *Prefect of Perugia;*
6. Dr Claudio Ricci, *Mayor of Assisi;*
7. Dr Marco Vinicio Guasticchi, *President of the Province of Perugia;*
8. Mr. Massimo Antonini, *Chief of Santa Maria degli Angeli Railway Station;*

The Members of the Delegations, after alighting from the train, take their places on minibuses provided by the *Ferrovie dello Stato*. The Holy Father takes his place on minibus no 1. Departure for the Basilica of *Santa Maria degli Angeli*.

10:15 At the entrance of the Basilica of *Santa Maria degli Angeli*, the Holy Father and the Heads of Delegation are received by:

- The Reverend José Rodriguez Carballo, *Minister General of the Friars Minor;*

- The Reverend Marco Tasca, *Minister General of the Conventual Friars Minor;*

- The Reverend Mauro Jöhri, *Minister General of the Capuchin Friars Minor;*

- The Reverend Michael J. Higgins, *Minister General of the Third Order Regular of Saint Francis;*

- Mrs. Encarnación del Pozo, *Minister General of the Secular Franciscan Order.*

At the main door of the Basilica, the Holy Father receives the Heads of Delegation (who take their places on the platform), while all the other Members take their places in the Basilica in the reserved area. The last to enter the Basilica is the Holy Father.

10:30 IN THE BASILICA

* Introduction by Cardinal Peter Kodwo Appiah Turkson, *President of the Pontifical Council for Justice and Peace.*

* Showing of a video recalling the Meeting of 1986.

* Testimonies for Peace:

1. His Holiness Bartholomew I, *Archbishop of Constantinople, Ecumenical Patriarch*
2. His Grace Dr Rowan Douglas Williams, *Archbishop of Canterbury, Primate of the Anglican Communion*
3. His Eminence Norvan Zakarian, *Primate Archbishop of the Diocese of France of the Armenian Apostolic Church, Holy See of Etchmiadzin*

organ interlude

4. The Reverend Dr Olav Fykse Tveit, *Secretary General of the World Council of Churches*
5. Rabbi David Rosen, *Representative of the Chief Rabbinate of Israel,*
6. Professor Wande Abimbola, Awise Agbaye, *Spokesperson for the Ifa and Yoruba Religion*

organ interlude

7. Acharya Shri Shrivatsa Goswami, *Representative of the Hindu Religion*
8. Venerable Ja-Seung, *President of the "Jogye Order", Korean Buddhism*
9. Dr Kyai Haji Hasyim Muzadi, *Secretary General of the International Conference of Islamic Schools*

10. Professor Julia Kristeva, *Bulgaria*

organ interlude

* Address by Pope Benedict XVI

12:30 At the conclusion of the meeting in the Basilica, the Holy Father and the Leaders of the Delegations enter the Convent of the *Portiuncula*.

At the entrance, the Holy Father is received by:

- The Reverend Fabrizio Migliasso, *Guardian;*
- The Reverend Massimo Lelli, *Rector of the Basilica.*

All the Members of the Delegations follow.

13:00 Lunch in the Refectory of the Convent.

13:45 The Members of the Delegations make their way to apartments as indicated, for a period of silence, reflection and personal prayer.

13:45 The young people walk from the Basilica of *Santa Maria degli Angeli* towards the Piazza San Francesco in Assisi.

15:15 The Members of the Delegations are accompanied to the minibuses in Piazza Santa Maria degli Angeli, and they depart for Assisi, where they immediately take their places in Piazza San Francesco in the reserved area.

15:45 The Holy Father and the Heads of Delegation leave the Convent of *Santa Maria degli Angeli* on foot; they process across the piazza in front of the Basilica as far as Via Los Angeles, where they board the minibuses that are waiting.

Transfer to Piazza San Francesco in Assisi.

16:30 ST FRANCIS LOWER PIAZZA: CONCLUDING MEETING

* Introduction by Cardinal Jean-Louis Tauran, *President of the Pontifical Council for Interreligious Dialogue,*

* Solemn Renewal of the Commitment to Peace

- Introduction by His Holiness Bartholomew I, *Archbishop of Constantinople, Ecumenical Patriarch*
- Bishop Dr. MounibYounan, *World Lutheran Federation*

- Dr.Tarunjit Singh Butalia, *Sikh*
- His Eminence Aleksandr, *Patriarchate of Moscow*
- Rev. Dr John Upton, *World Baptist Alliance*
- Mulana Mohammed Zubair Abid, *Muslim*
- Metropolitan Mar Gregorios, *Syrian Orthodox Patriarchate of Antioch*
- Prof. Wai Hop Tong, *Taoist*
- MostVen. Phra Phommolee, *Buddhist*
- Mr.Tsunekiyo Tanaka, *Shinto*
- Mrs. Betty Ehrenberg, *International Joint Commitee on Interreligious Consultations*
- Rev. Dr Setri Nyomi, *World Communion of Reformed Churches*
- Guillermo Hurtado, *Non-believers*
- Conclusion by Pope Benedict XVI

* Moment of silence

* Some young people give lighted lamps to the Heads of Delegation

* Introduction by Cardinal Kurt Koch, *President of the Pontifical Council for Promoting Christian Unity,*

* Exchange of the sign of peace among the Delegates.

* During the final hymn, the Holy Father and the Heads of Delegation descend from the platform and enter the Lower Basilica of San Francesco.

At the entrance they are received by the Reverend Giuseppe Piemontese, *Guardian of the Sacred Convent.*

* The Holy Father and the Heads of Delegation go down into the Crypt for a silent visit to the tomb of Saint Francis.

Meanwhile all the other Delegates are accompanied to the coaches and arrive at the Railway Station of *Santa Maria degli Angeli.*

After the visit to the tomb of Saint Francis, the Heads of Delegation go up to the piazza outside the Lower Basilica and take their places on the minibuses.

The Holy Father, on leaving the tomb of Saint Francis, enters the Refectory of the Convent, where he poses for a photograph with the religious community.

18:30 Departure by minibus for the Railway Station of *Santa Maria degli Angeli*.

At the station the Holy Father takes his leave from the authorities who received him in the morning.

19:00 Departure by train for Rome.

20:45 Arrival at the Vatican Railway Station.

FRIDAY 28 OCTOBER 2011

11:30 In the *Sala Clementina* of the Apostolic Palace, Pope Benedict XVI receives in audience the Members of the Delegations who were present in Assisi.

13:00 In the Atrium of the *Aula Paolo VI*, Cardinal Tarcisio Bertone, Secretary of State of His Holiness, offers lunch to the Members of the Delegations.

DAY OF REFLECTION, DIALOGUE AND PRAYER FOR PEACE AND JUSTICE IN THE WORLD
"*PILGRIMS OF TRUTH, PILGRIMS OF PEACE*"

Opening Meeting: Testimonies for Peace

Testimony offered by each religious tradition in the Basilica of Saint Mary of the Angels, Assisi (27 October 2011)

INTRODUCTORY MONITION

Cardinal PETER KODWO APPIAH TURKSON
President of the Pontifical Council for Justice and Peace

In October 1986 at the invitation of Blessed John Paul II, Heads and Representatives of Christian Churches, Ecclesial Communities and World Religions gathered here in Assisi, the city of St Francis, to fast and pray for peace. They came mindful that "*peace*", as the Pope declared on that occasion, "*needs to be built on justice, truth, freedom and love*", and that "*Religions have the necessary function of helping to dispose human hearts, so that true peace can be fostered and preserved*".[1]

Twenty-five years after that historic gathering, I have the pleasure to welcome you heartily to Assisi, where we have come together at the invitation of Pope Benedict XVI to celebrate the memory of *that* moment of brotherhood and prayer and to set out anew as "*pilgrims of truth and pilgrims of peace*". We are gathered here aware of *a common call to live together in peace, a deep yearning that throbs incessantly in our hearts. The indefatigable search for that desires attainment makes us fellow travellers.*

We come from different religious traditions and from various parts of the world to renew and strengthen a quest for the truth that each of us, out of our own tradition, is ceaselessly committed to. We come also to bear witness to the great power of religion for good, and to renew a common commitment to building

[1] John Paul II, *Address to the Leaders of Non-Christian Religions present at Assisi*, 29 October 1986.

peace, to reconciling those in conflict and to bringing man back into harmony with creation.

The twenty-five years of our joint effort for peace have richly displayed our sense of brotherhood and solidarity in the service of our world and the human family. But the years have also been fraught with challenges to the sense of man and history. We have entered a century in which ideologies would reduce the sense of human person, and distort the relationships with nature. The strong resource-competition among peoples in a climate-constrained environment threatens to dissolve the fabric of human society and devastate the very order of creation which Francis of Assisi praised in his *Canticle of the Sun.* The beautiful song bespeaks an awakening to the universe to be seen not only as a collection of things to be worked and consumed but also as a "*community of life*" to be entered into profoundly, humbly and creatively. Thanks to electronic media and globalization, we live in a time of an unprecedented wealth, knowledge and proximity; yet is there not ever more insecurity, inequality and deprivation? We are torn apart by intolerance, hostility and violence so totally contradictory to the vision of *the Poverello of Assisi,* whose example inspires us to regard one another with respect, yes love, regardless of origin and creed.

May our experience of these twenty-five years then beckon us ever more intensely and with a great sense of urgency to recommit ourselves today, with the endowments of reason and the gifts of faith, to becoming ever more pilgrims of truth and making our world a place of ever greater *peace!*

Upon us all, then, may rich blessings of truth and peace shower abundantly!

SA SAINTETÉ BARTHOLOMÉE 1er
Patriarche Oecuménique

Sainteté, Éminences, Excellences,
Mesdames et Messieurs les représentants des différentes religions du monde,
Mesdames, Mesdemoiselles, Messieurs, Chers amis,

Tout dialogue véritable porte en lui les germes d'une métamorphose à venir. La nature de cette transformation constitue une conversion qui nous fait sortir de nos particularismes pour envisager l'autre comme sujet de relation et non plus comme objet d'indifférence.

Car, c'est de l'indifférence que naît la haine.
C'est de l'indifférence que naît le conflit.
C'est de l'indifférence que naît la violence.

Contre de tels maux, seul le dialogue est une solution viable et à long terme. En tant que responsables religieux, notre rôle est avant tout d'en faire la promotion et de montrer par notre exemple quotidien que nous ne vivons pas uniquement les uns contre les autres, ou encore les uns à côté des autres, mais bien les uns avec les autres, dans un esprit de paix, de solidarité et de fraternité. Mais pour ce faire, le dialogue appelle un renversement complet de notre manière d'être au monde. Nous entendons bien les voix de ceux magnifiant le protectionnisme, car la mondialisation porte dans son sillage un courant relativiste engendrant par opposition des replis communautaires et identitaires dans lesquels se cache l'inimitié. C'est pourquoi notre engagement ne doit pas uniquement se limiter à un travail à l'extérieur de nos communautés, mais il convient aussi d'en comprendre les logiques *ad intra*. Notre responsabilité en est alors d'autant plus grande et l'organisation de cette rencontre pour la paix à Assise prend toute son importance. Il ne s'agit pas, comme certains l'insinuent, de faire du dialogue interreligieux, un dialogue œcuménique, dans une perspective syncrétiste. Bien au contraire, la vision que nous prônons dans le dialogue interreligieux possède un sens tout à fait particulier, qui découle de la capacité même des religions à investir le champ sociétal pour y promouvoir de la paix. Tel est l'esprit d'Assise, tel est aussi la voie sur laquelle le Patriarcat Œcuménique de Constantinople s'est engagé depuis de nombreuses années.

Aujourd'hui encore, vingt-cinq ans depuis la première rencontre ici même à Assise, convoquée par le Bienheureux Pape Jean-Paul II, dix ans après les événements dramatiques du 11 septembre et à l'heure où les « *printemps arabes* » n'ont

pas mis fin aux tensions intercommunautaires, la place des religions dans les fermentations du monde reste ambigüe. Nous continuons, en effet, à craindre la marginalisation accrue des communautés chrétiennes du Moyen-Orient. Nous devons nous lever contre la déformation du message des religions, de ses symboles par les auteurs de la violence. Réinvestir le religieux par le religieux, tel est l'exigence nécessaire afin de promouvoir la dimension humanitaire d'une figure du divin se voulant miséricordieuse, juste et charitable.

C'est pourquoi les responsables religieux doivent s'investir du processus de rétablissement de la paix. Car la seule manière de nous lever contre l'instrumentalisation belliciste des religions est de condamner fermement la guerre et les conflits et de nous placer comme des médiateurs de paix et de réconciliation.

Sainteté,

Les quelques éléments que nous venons porter à la réflexion générale dans le cadre de cette nouvelle rencontre d'Assise convergent en faveur d'une réconciliation globale de l'homme avec Dieu, de l'homme avec lui-même, mais aussi de l'homme avec l'environnement. Car l'altruisme ne peut se limiter aux seules relations à l'intérieur de l'humanité. Qui dit « *être de relation* » dit aussi expérience extensive de l'altérité, jusque dans la nature elle-même en tant que création de Dieu.

Notre dialogue est donc réconciliation. Tous nous nous reconnaîtrons dans ces paroles des Béatitudes : « *Bienheureux les artisans de paix, car ils seront appelés fils de Dieu* » (*Mt* 5, 9). Cette responsabilité n'est pas que verbale, elle attend de nous que nous soyons fidèles à notre foi, fidèles au dessein de Dieu dans le monde, tout en répondant à ses interrogations. Soyons les signes de cet engagement, alors seulement la paix dont nous sommes à la recherche, ce trésor, si chèrement acquis et malheureusement si rapidement perdu, rayonnera dans le monde. Nous prions notre Seigneur Dieu qu'il accorde au monde sa grâce et qu'Il nous inspire à être des pèlerins de la vérité et de la paix.

His Grace Dr. Rowan Douglas Williams
Archbishop of Canterbury

Your Holiness, Your All-Holiness, Your Beatitudes,
Brothers and Sisters in Christ, Dear friends,

It is a great privilege to stand with you to celebrate the anniversary of the first Day of Prayer for Peace held here under the guidance and leadership of Blessed Pope John Paul II. The late pope believed passionately that the concerns of human beings in our age for justice and stability were matters that demanded a common witness from people of faith, with- out any compromise of our own particular convictions and traditions. The years since that first assembly have reinforced this belief most strongly. The challenges of our time are such that no one religious body can claim to have all the practical resources needed to confront them, even if we believe that we have all we need in the spiritual or doctrinal realm. So we are here not to affirm a minimum common ground of belief, but to speak out of the depth of our traditions in all their distinctiveness, so that the human family will be more fully aware of how much wisdom there is to draw upon in the struggle against the foolishness of a world still obsessed with fear and suspicion, still in love with the idea of a security based on defensive hostility, and still capable of tolerating or ignoring massive loss of life among the poorest through war and disease.

All such failures of the spirit have their roots largely in an inability to recognize strangers as sharing with us one and the same nature, one and the same personal dignity. Lasting peace begins when we see the neighbour as another self – and so begin to understand how and why we must love the neighbour as we love ourselves.

For the Christian, the heart of all this is the conviction that in Jesus of Nazareth God himself identifies with human nature, and thus with each and every human person. Every human face now looks different because of the fact that God has taken on a human face. What we recognize in our neighbour is someone who not only bears the image of God by virtue of creation, but bears also the possibility of carrying the likeness of Jesus Christ by virtue of the new creation. And if this is so, we cannot ultimately be strangers. What makes for the life of any one person or community makes for the life of all.

All people of faith have in common the conviction that we are not ultimately strangers to each other. And if we are not strangers, we must sooner or later find a way to embody that mutual recognition in true and lasting relationships of friendship. We are here today to declare our will—or rather our passionate determination—to persuade our world that human beings do not have to be strangers,

and that recognition is as possible as it is necessary because of our universal relation to God.

I end by quoting some lines from a great Christian poet of my own nation of Wales, Waldo Williams – a teacher, a man of deep prayer and an activist for peace throughout his adult life. He wrote a poem[1] called *'What is Man?'*, and these are the opening verses –

What is it to be alive? To dwell in a great hall
Between narrow walls.
What is it to recognize? To find a single root
Beneath all the branches.
What is it to have faith? To stay still at the hearth
Until we are ready to receive our guest.
What is it to forgive? To find a way through the thorns
To stand alongside our old enemy.

May God help us to answer such questions in such a way by means of our words and our witness.

[1] *Pa beth yw Dyn?'* (1952), Waldo Williams (1904–71)

Son Éminence Norvan Zakarian

Primat du diocèse de l'Eglise Apostolique Arménienne de France Délégué pour l'Europe Occidentale du Catholicosat de tous les Arméniens

Au nom du chef spirituel de l'Église arménienne Sa Sainteté Karékine II, Catholicos de Tous les Arméniens, nous sommes heureux d'exprimer notre plus vive gratitude pour cette excellente initiative d'inviter les différents chefs religieux à Assise, en ce jour du 27 octobre, vingt-cinq ans après l'historique premier appel pour la paix du bienheureux Pape Jean-Paul II, afin de réfléchir à nouveau sur l'importance cruciale du dialogue et de la prière pour la paix et pour la justice dans le monde.

Ainsi, la promotion de la paix dans le monde fait partie intégrante de la mission par la- quelle l'Église continue l'œuvre rédemptrice du Christ sur la terre. L'Église élève les hommes au-dessus de leur simple condition pour les mener vers l'absolu. Elle les éloigne de la haine et des égoïsmes pour les rassembler au sein d'une communauté ouverte et généreuse. De fait, l'Église est dans le Christ et peut constituer "sacrement", c'est-à-dire signe et instrument de paix dans le monde et pour le monde. La promotion d'une paix véritable représente une expression de la foi chrétienne dans l'amour que Dieu nourrit pour chaque être humain. De la foi libératrice en l'amour de Dieu dérive une nouvelle vision du monde, et une nouvelle façon de s'approcher de l'autre, qu'il s'agisse d'un simple individu ou d'un peuple entier. Il s'agit d'une foi qui change et renouvelle la vie, inspirée par la paix que le Christ a laissé à ses disciples. Sous l'impulsion puissante de cette foi, l'Église souhaite promouvoir l'unité des chrétiens en même temps qu'une collaboration fructueuse avec les croyants des autres religions, et, au-delà, celle de tous les hommes en général. Les différences religieuses ne peuvent pas et ne doivent pas constituer une cause de conflit. La recherche commune de la paix de la part de tous les croyants est plutôt un facteur prégnant d'unité entre les peuples. L'Église exhorte les individus, les peuples, les nations et les États à partager sa préoccupation de rétablir et consolider la paix, en insistant en particulier sur le rôle central du droit des gens.

Le pardon réciproque ne doit pas supprimer les exigences de la justice ni, encore moins, entraver le chemin qui conduit à la vérité : justice et vérité représentent plutôt les conditions concrètes de la réconciliation. Les initiatives tendant à instituer des organismes judiciaires internationaux se révèlent opportunes. De tels organismes, se prévalant du principe de la juridiction universelle et soutenus par des procédures adéquates, respectueuses des droits des accusés et des victimes,

peuvent établir la vérité sur les crimes perpétrés durant les conflits armés et tout particulièrement le crime le plus grave entre tous: le génocide. Toutefois, il est nécessaire d'aller au-delà de l'identification des comportements criminels, aussi bien par action qu'omission, et au-delà des décisions concernant les nécessaires procédures de réparation, pour parvenir au rétablissement de relations d'accueil réciproque entre les peuples divisés, sous le signe de la réconciliation. Il est enfin nécessaire de promouvoir le respect du droit à la paix afin de favoriser la construction d'une société au sein de laquelle les rapports de force seront remplacés par les rapports de collaboration en vue du bien commun.

Alors, d'un même cœur et d'une même bouche nous pouvons dire avec le psalmiste :

« La miséricorde et la vérité se sont rencontrées, la justice et la paix se sont embrassées. La vérité s'est levée de la terre, et la justice a regardé depuis le ciel » (Psaume 84).

Rev. Dr. Olav Fykse Tveit

Secretary General of the World Council of Churches

Your Holiness, Pope Benedict XVI,
Your Eminences, Your Excellences, Fellow Religious Leaders,

St Francis offers us inspiration for how faith in God, open dialogue and genuine encounter can lead to significant contributions to a just peace.

The world needs peacemakers of faith. The faith communities – like the 349 member churches of the World Council of Churches – need the young "*Change Makers*" of the world. Francis was a young man when he surrendered his life to God. His passion for the goodness of creation and example of radical daring for peace show the significance of faith and the courage of young people. What Francis accomplished as a young man in his twenties is a salutary reminder to us of the important role that young people need to and can play both in the faith communities and in wider society. Without this, we would not be here today.

Also today, peace in the world requires the perspectives and the contributions of young people. A great obstacle to a just peace today is the high level of unemployment among young people all over the world. It feels as though we are gambling with the welfare and happiness of a generation. We need the vision and the courage of young people for the necessary changes. We see how young people lead processes of democratization and peace in many countries today. We have to acknowledge that we have not always been good at honoring and fostering the contributions young people can make in our religious communities. We elders standing here need to work together for peace be- tween generations and to give young people throughout the world real hope for the future.

The world needs the encounters between the leaders of faith communities. In the course of a war being fought which had Jerusalem as its ultimate prize, Francis came to share experiences of faith with the Sultan in Egypt. As many crusaders, he came to convert the other. He became changed, converted, himself.

We are here to let the conversion of Francis speak to us and to let the conversation between us become a source for justice and peace. There is more to win through the respect for the other. A sustainable peace requires that there is a space, a safe and secure space, not only for me but also for the other. Christians are reminded that the cross is not for crusades but a sign of how God's love embraces everybody, also the other.

For the World Council of Churches a clear commitment over the coming years is to work for just peace in Jerusalem and all the peoples living there and around that city with *Shalom – Salaam* in its name. It is the city called and named

to be a vision of peace, but which through- out history has so often become a place of conflict. As I visited Pakistan some days ago, I was reminded how other peoples are suffering under clashes of interests as a consequence of the fact that the conflicts around Jerusalem are not solved. This city, holy to Jews, Christians and Muslims, is a visible symbol of our longing, our highest and best desires, our love of beauty and our desire to worship God. But it is also a powerful reminder of how this best also can go wrong. Throughout history, human beings have found it so difficult to love without also seeking to possess exclusively.

Let us as religious leaders pray for justice and peace for Jerusalem and for all who live there. In a mysterious way, Jerusalem does not simply unveil these realities about the human condition but also challenges us at the same time to address them. Christians believe that all humans are created in God's image, thus affirming the undeniable human dignity of every person and the oneness of humanity. We are called to participate in the re-establishing of peace for Jerusalem, for the re-creation and the repairing of God's world. We are account- able to God and to one another for the peace in our time and for what we say and do not say to achieve it. Let us together follow the example of St Francis and others, young and old, women and men, to muster the courage to make just peace.

Rabbi David Rosen, KSG, CBE

International Director of Interreligious Affairs, AJC

By definition, a pilgrimage is much more than a journey. The Hebrew words for pilgrimage are, *"aliyah la'regel"*, which translate as *ascending for the foot-festival.*

The Biblical concept of ascent was both literal and spiritual. It was literal because one came up the Judean mountains to Jerusalem, to the Holy Temple. However, the physical symbolism sought to imbue a state of mind in the pilgrim's consciousness, of spiritual ascent, of being even closer to God; and consequently to be in accord with the Divine Will and commandments.

This vision of pilgrimage, of ascent, is central to the prophetic vision of the establishment of the Kingdom of Heaven on earth – the messianic vision of universal peace.

In the words of the prophet Isaiah (2: 3&4) "... *And many peoples shall go forth and say 'let us go up to the mountain of the Lord to the house of the God of Jacob, that He may teach us His ways and that we may walk in His paths; for out of Zion shall go forth instruction and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem'.*

He shall judge between the nations and discern for many peoples; and they shall beat their swords into ploughshares and their spears into pruning hooks. Nation shall not lift up sword against nation and they shall not learn war any more" and the prophet continues (11: 6-9) ... "the wolf shall dwell with the lamb; and the leopard shall lie down with the kid; and the calf and the lion and the fatling together; and a little child shall lead them.

The cow and the bear shall graze together their children shall lie down; and the lion shall eat straw like the cattle. A baby shall play on a snake hole and a child shall put his hand on an adder's den. They shall not harm nor destroy in all my holy mountain, for the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord as the waters cover the sea."

There is a very well-known comment of the great rabbi Meir Simcha of Dwinsk, who lived a hundred years ago. He observed that this vision of peace had already taken place in the religious history of humankind – in Noah's ark. Already there, predatory animals had to live a vegetarian existence and their potential prey could live in peace. However he points out that the profound difference between the situation in Noah's ark and Isaiah's vision, is that in Noah's ark there was no choice. This was the only option available for the animals in order to survive the flood. Isaiah's vision however, is born out of "*the knowledge of the Lord*"; it is a vision that emanates from the deepest spiritual understanding and volition.

For many in our world, peace is a pragmatic necessity as indeed it is, and we must not diminish in any way from the blessing for our world from such pragmatism. However what men and women of faith seek and for which they strive "*to*

ascend to the mountain of the Lord", is the appreciation of peace as the sublime expression of Divine Will and the Divine Image in which every human person is created.

For demonstrating this aspiration in such a visible manner already in Assisi twenty five years ago, we owe a debt of gratitude to the memory of blessed John Paul "and we must give profound thanks to his successor Pope Benedict XVI for continuing in this path. The sages of the Talmud teach us that not only is peace the name of God (*Shabbat* 10b– see *Judges* 6:24), but it is the essential prerequisite for redemption, as it is written (*Isaiah* 52:7) "He announces peace ... He announces salvation" (*Deuteronomy Rabbah* 20:10). Furthermore our sages point out that there is no other value that we are obliged to go out of our way to pursue as we are for peace, as it is written (*Psalm* 34:15) "seek peace and pursue it".

May this gathering today reinvigorate all men and women of faith and good will to redound our efforts to make this goal a reality, the reality that brings true blessing and healing to humanity, as it is written "*peace, peace, to the far and to the near and I shall heal him*" (*Isaiah* 57:19).

Prof. Wande Abimbola, Awise Agbaye

Spokesperson of Ifu and Yoruba Religion in the World

First of all, let me express my profound gratitude to the Holy Father, Pope Benedict XVI, for inviting me to participate in the Day of Reflection, Dialogue, and Prayer for Justice and Peace in the World. I am sure that I speak for the leadership and practitioners of the Indigenous Religions of Africa and the World at large when I say we are delighted to be included in such a historic and momentous event. May the Holy Father continue to wax strong, to fulfill his mission and destiny to the peoples of the world. Secondly, I bring greetings and salutations from the peoples of Africa and the members of Yoruba Religion worldwide, whose spokesperson I am.

Ríran le rán mi wá o o ò
Èmi kí mo ránrà mi
Àsé dowó enì tó rán mi wá.

I am a spokesperson of those who sent me
I am not speaking for my personal self
The spiritual authority with which I speak belongs to those who sent me.

The time has come for the leaders of all the world's religions to have a new frame of mind in which indigenous religions are given the same respect and consideration as other religions. We cannot have peace in the world when we disrespect, abuse, or look down upon our neighbors. A fundamental prerequisite for peace, therefore, is for all peoples of faith to have respect and love for one another. Let us relate to people on the basis of their character, not on the basis of the religions they practice or the denominations to which they belong.

Let us all work together for greater respect, love and justice, while at the same time holding fast to the tenets of the religions we espouse. We must always remember that our own religion, along with the religions practiced by other people, are valid and precious in the eyes of the Almighty, who created all of us with such plural and different ways of life and belief systems.

To respect our fellow men and women is not enough. We need also to develop a profound respect for nature. Unless and until nature, our Mother, is given her due regard and honor in our thoughts and actions, human beings cannot find the true peace and tranquility which we are all looking for. What is even more, if we continue on the same path of disrespect and destruction of nature on which we have trodden for centuries, that path can only lead to disaster.

Adéerí lawo Aláràán
Adétutú lawo Ajífòràngbogbolà
A dífá fún Òrúnmìlà
Ifá n lo lèé gbólómí tútú níyàwó
Ayé Ifá tutù jomi lo
Baraà mi Èrìgì Álò
Ifá ló gbólómí tútù níyàwó
Ayé Ifá tutù jomi lo

Adeyeri, Ifa priest of Alaraan
Adetutu, Ifa priest of Ajiforanghogbola
These are the Ifa priests who divined for Orunmila
On the day he was going to marry She-who-bathes-with-cold-water

As a result, the life of Ifa became cooler than water
My great Lord, Erigi Alo,
Ifa married She-who-bathes-with-cold-water
The life of Ifa became cooler than water.

The above-quoted verse is a reference to Olokun, the last and most beloved wife of Ifa. May the cool waters of Olokun, from the depths of the oceans, bring coolness, love, tranquility and peace to all of us and to our world which is riddled by strife, hatred, war and bigotry.

Let us work together to achieve and sustain a better world.

Acharya Shri Shrivatsa Goswami

Sri Radharamana Temple, Vrindavan
India Representative of Hindu Religion

"O infinite bodied Lord! I see YOU in each hand and feet, in each eye and head, in each name and being. I bow down to YOU in all of them."

Hinduism is a pilgrimage from ignorance to truth, from death to immortality. This journey is of two kinds. Moving outside, we search for the truth that can be manifest in the physical world. We seek to strengthen ecological, social and economic systems. The equitable distribution of food and other material resources is the highest religious virtue and practice.

Yet, there is the other: The pilgrimage within. We could not sustain the outward march unless we journey inside the world of values and principles that sustain human behavior. Truth and Peace top the list of these universally applicable values called *dharma*. For Mahatma Gandhi, Truth was God.

As for peace, there is a distinctive Hindu prayer for that very thing. It is a prayer for peace in earth and sky, in vegetation and herbs, in water and air–but that is not all. The person who prays this prayer, prays for the *peace that comes in the process of peace itself.* Peace can never he achieved through violent means. From Krishna to Buddha, from Mahatma Gandhi to Martin Luther King, Jr., to Bishop Tutu-all these pilgrims of truth declare that there is no way to peace. Peace itself is the way.

Our common goal of peace can be reached through our commitment to truth-*satyagraha.* That commitment, if obstructed and denied, still finds its way-through non-violent non-cooperation. History stands witness to its strength.

25 years ago, here in Assisi, Pope John Paul II started us on today's pilgrimage. So now we must reflect upon our progress along the way. Why have we not come closer to where we wanted to be? Are we missing the inward part of the journey? Dialogue will be a futile exercise unless we undertake it with humility, forbearance, and the desire to respect the "other" and that too without wanting the same in return. This will empower us to say "no" to injustice of any kind.

It requires a lot of courage, and that courage will only come from prayer. Let us there- fore join Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu, the great 16th century spiritual master, in his prayer: *"I do not desire wealth or worldly enjoyments; nor do I seek fame or name. I only beg that I may serve others with love"*. This is strenuous business. It requires us to see anew what the ancient Vedas declared: that the truth is one and at the same time, that it is professed in many different ways. *Om Shantih, Shantih, Shantih.*

JA-SEUNG

President of the "Jogye Order", Korean Buddhism

First of all, I would like to take this opportunity to thank *His Holiness Pope Benedict* for providing me an opportunity to speak on this auspicious occasion. I am honored to offer my congratulations to the assembly of world religious leaders who are gathering here in Assisi, a very holy site filled with peace and reconciliation.

Dear religious leaders,

In the twenty-five years that have passed since the World's religious leaders gathered here in Assisi, our world has changed dramatically. The new era is rapidly approaching. The development of cutting edge information technology and the social networks has given us the opportunity to connect and communicate with each other worldwide, instantaneously. As we know from experience, the ramifications of this hyper-connection are also instantaneous. Everything is interconnected. You and I do not exist as separate individuals; rather, we are all intricately connected with each other. Buddhism offers insight into this truth through the doctrine of Dependent Origination. Just as there are varieties of flowers that blossom and wither away, you and I will also blossom and wither. But each of our lives is precious, a beautiful flower that turns the world into a single flower and makes it a glorious and magnificent place.

Just like these flowers, every sentient being is beautiful and must be respected. There is no place for violence and terrorism in religion, which insists that every life is precious and must be cherished.

For this reason, I would like to propose "*Fraternity for Life*", a coming together of people of faith to eliminate the roots of violence and war that are waged in the name of religion or ideology. I also would like you to join me in a "*Fraternity for Peace*", so that harmonious co-existence and mutual respect, regardless religion, race and culture are made possible in this world. Moreover, we must accept our cultural differences and overcome cultural conflicts through mutual understanding and spiritual growth. We must come together in a "*Fraternity for Culture*". We must also make a "*Fraternity for Sharing*" to help those people still suffering in poverty, hunger, and inequality. I believe that all these things *can* be accomplished through spiritual practice. From an ultimate point of view, everything is already perfect, and we are all connected like delicate flower petals. Finally,

therefore, I would like to propose a "*Fraternity for Practice*" so that we all may experience this truth personally and help to make this world as pure and fragrant as a flower.

Dear religious leaders,

The "*Declaration for Religious Peace*" from the *Jogye Order of Korean Buddhism* promotes mutual respect among different beliefs. We pledge that, guided by love, kindness and great compassion, we will work with people of all beliefs to help those who suffer to attain happiness and peace. Together, we can reduce poverty and disease, prevent violence and war, and bring an end to environmental destruction caused by indiscriminate development. Through our combined faith we can move humanity in the direction of peace and harmony. May All Beings Be Happy!

Dr. Kyai Haji Hasyim Muzadi

General Secretary of International Conference of Islamic Scholars (ICIS) Former Chairman of Nabdlatul Ulama (NU)

Supposedly, the essence and objectives of the presence of religions on this earth is to strengthen the values and dignity of humanity, peace and world progress because it is intended to enlighten humanity, and not the opposite.

However, the reality demonstrates that many human problems on this planet in fact originate from people with religions, even though, the problems arising from people of religions do not mean it originate from the religion itself. This occurs simply because true religion with its wholesome teachings, may have followers that cannot fully comprehend the wholesomeness holistically / completely.

A lack of holistic understanding of the teachings of religions occurs when their followers only possess a partial understanding and a lack of complete comprehension regarding the relation amongst religions.

A mistake in understanding religious comprehension no doubt has caused a misapplication of that religion itself.

For example, if a community of a religion is mistaken in understanding its ritual and theological aspects, its misunderstanding will only impact its followers.

However, when they are mistaken in understanding the social aspect of the religion, then its mistake will impact not only its followers but also society as a whole, such as in the forms of social tension and even social conflict. This social conflict may also slide into other forrns of conflict between States in the world.

Every religion possesses its own identity. Between religions they also possess similarities and differences. A similarity in every religion is a hope for the creation of human harmony, justice, prosperity and an improved standard of life human.

An opposing idea between religions is an issue of theology and ritual. For that reason, so as to attain lasting harmony and co-existence amongst religions, therefore what is not similar should not and must not be forced to be opposing, and what views are not shared should not be imposed. By doing this, the preservation of co-existence amongst religions may be assured in accordance to each individual religious faith.

Apart from the factor of misunderstandings in comprehending religions, there are also other factors that are reasons behind social conflict and conflict amongst believers which are based on the non religious interests that piggy-back religious teachings and use religion as a motive for non religious objectives.

Interests beyond religious goals may be political, economic and cultural or other non religious interests that are made to seem religious.

Such interests may originate from specific groups that declare their motives in the name of religion and even refer to religious themes.

Our duties as religious communities are to bring freedom to all believers to truly comprehend their fates and reduce their misunderstanding of religions that leads social conflict amongst humanity.

Furthermore, we must be wise in differentiating problems that may be categorized as religious and those problems that are abused to be a religious problem.

Many times, the political authority's interests are labeled as religious issues, whereas in fact its essence is far from that truth. In this regards, we must identify religion above all interests. Should religion be placed above such interests, then it will serve as a beacon of hope from its forefathers.

On the other hand, if religions are placed below such interests, then the religious community will forever be at war.

For that reason, the harmony of religious followers must begin from within each of the religions packaged in a peaceful setting with the goals of reducing conflict in this world.

Prof. Julia Kristeva

Qu'est-ce que l'humanisme? Un grand point d'interrogation à l'endroit du plus grand sérieux? C'est dans la tradition européenne, grecque-juive-chrétienne que s'est produit cet événement qui ne cesse de promettre, de décevoir et de se refonder.

Mesdames et Messieurs,

Les mots de Jean-Paul II, « N'ayez pas peur! », ne s'adressent pas seulement aux croyants qu'il encourageait à résister au totalitarisme. L'appel de ce pape – apôtre des droits de l'homme – nous incite aussi à ne pas craindre la culture européenne, mais au contraire à oser l'humanisme: en bâtissant des complicités entre l'humanisme chrétien et celui qui, issu de la Renaissance et des Lumières, ambitionne d'élucider les voies risquées de la liberté.

1. L'humanisme du XXIème siècle n'est pas un théomorphisme. C'est dire que ni « *valeur* » ni « *fin* » supérieures, l'Homme Majuscule n'existe pas. Après la *Shoah* et le *Goulag*, l'humanisme a le devoir de rappeler aux hommes et aux femmes que si nous nous estimons les seuls législateurs, c'est uniquement par la mise en question continue de notre situation personnelle, historique et sociale que nous pouvons décider de la société et de l'histoire.

2. L'humanisme est un processus de refondation permanente, qui ne se développe que par des ruptures qui sont des innovations. La mémoire n'est pas du passé: *la Bible, les Évangiles, le Coran, le Rigveda, le Tao* nous habitent au présent. Pour que l'humanisme puisse se développer et se refonder, le moment est venu de reprendre les codes moraux construits au cours de l'histoire: sans les affaiblir, pour les problématiser, en les rénovant au regard des nouvelles singularités.

3. L'humanisme est un féminisme. La libération des désirs devait conduire à l'émancipation des femmes. Les combats pour une parité économique, juridique et politique nécessitent une nouvelle réflexion sur le choix et la responsabilité de la maternité. La sécularisation est encore la seule civilisation qui manque de discours sur le maternel. Ce lien passionnel entre la mère et l'enfant, par lequel la biologie devient sens, altérité et parole, est une « *reliance* » qui, différente de la fonction paternelle et de la religiosité, les complète et participe à part entière à l'éthique humaniste.

4. Parce qu'il éveille les désirs de liberté des hommes et des femmes, l'humanisme nous apprend à les soigner. Le souci (*cura*) amoureux d'autrui, le soin de la terre, des jeunes, des malades, des handicapés, des vieillissants dépendants sont des expériences intérieures qui créent des proximités nouvelles et des solidarités

inouïes. Nous n'avons pas d'autre moyen d'accompagner la révolution anthropologique qu'annoncent déjà la course en avant des sciences, le laisser-aller de la technique et de la finance, et l'impuissance du modèle démocratique pyramidal à canaliser les innovations.

5. L'homme ne fait pas l'histoire, mais l'histoire, c'est nous. Pour la première fois, *Homo Sapiens* est capable de détruire la terre et soi-même au nom de ses croyances, religions ou idéologies. Pour la première fois aussi les hommes et les femmes sont capables de réévaluer en toute transparence la religiosité constitutive de l'être humain. La rencontre de nos diversités ici, à Assise, témoigne que l'hypothèse de la destruction n'est pas la seule possible. Personne ne sait quels humains nous succéderont, à nous qui sommes engagés dans cette transvaluation anthropologique et cosmique sans précédent. Ni dog- me providentiel, ni jeu de l'esprit, la refondation de l'humanisme est un pari.

Mesdames et Messieurs,

L'ère du soupçon ne suffit plus. Face aux crises et menaces aggravées, voici venue l'ère du pari. Osons parier sur le renouvellement continu des capacités des hommes et des femmes à croire et à savoir ensemble. Pour que, dans le multivers bordé de vide, l'humanité puisse poursuivre longtemps son destin créatif.

POPE'S OPENING ADDRESS*

* See p.

DAY OF REFLECTION, DIALOGUE AND PRAYER FOR PEACE AND JUSTICE IN THE WORLD "*PILGRIMS OF TRUTH, PILGRIMS OF PEACE*"

Concluding Meeting: Common Pledge for Peace

San Francesco's Church Lower Piazza, Assisi (27 October 2011)

INTRODUCTORY MONITION

Cardinal Jean-Louis TAURAN
President of the Pontifical Council for Interreligious Dialogue

"Do not repay anyone evil for evil; be concerned for what is noble in the sight of all. If possible, on your part, live at peace with all." (*Rm* 12, 17-18)

In the silence which became prayer, with fasting, expression of our desire for purification and closeness with those who suffer, and in the pilgrimage which has seen us making our way towards the Truth, we have come to the last part of our celebration.

Hope for peace has been reawakened in personal prayer and in listening to the testimonies. Each one of us, returning to his or her home, has at heart to be a witness and a messenger: peace is possible, even today!

In a few moments we will renew our common commitment to never resign ourselves to wars and to divisions. We know, having had such an experience again today, that, with the help of God, faith can conquer doubt, confidence can overcome anxiety, hope can prevail over fear.

Peace and blessing on all!

Sa Sainteté Bartholomée 1er
Patriarche Oecuménique

«Réunis ici, à Assise, nous avons réfléchi ensemble sur la paix, don de Dieu et bien commun de l'humanité entière. Bien qu'appartenant à des traditions religieuses diverses, nous affirmons que, pour construire la paix, il est nécessaire d'aimer le prochain, en respectant la règle d'or : « Fais aux autres ce que tu voudrais que l'on te fasse ».

Animés par cette conviction, nous ne nous lasserons pas de travailler au grand chantier de la paix, et pour cela :

Bishop Dr. Mounib Younan
Lutheran World Federation

We commit ourselves to proclaiming our firm conviction that violence and terrorism are incompatible with the authentic spirit of religions, and, as we condemn every recourse to violence and war in the name of God or religion, we commit ourselves to doing everything possible to eliminate the root causes of terrorism

Dr. Tarunjit Singh Butalia
Sikh

We commit ourselves to educating people to mutually respect and esteem, in order to help bring about a peaceful and fraternal coexistence between people of different ethnic groups, cultures and religions.

Metropolitan Alexandr
Moscow Patriarchate

We commit ourselves to fostering the culture of dialogue, so that there will be an increase of understanding and mutual trust between individuals and among peoples, for these are the premise of authentic peace.

Rev. Dr. John Upton
Baptist World Alliance

We commit ourselves to defending the right of everyone to live a decent life in accordance with their own cultural identity, and to form freely a family of their own.

MULANA MOHAMMED ZUBAIR ABID
Moslim

We commit ourselves to frank and patient dialogue, refusing to consider our differences as an insurmountable barrier, but recognizing instead that to encounter the diversity of others can become an opportunity for greater reciprocal understanding.

METROPOLITAN MAR GREGORIOS
Syrian – Orthodox Patriarchate of Antioch

We commit ourselves to forgiving one another for past and present errors and prejudices, and to supporting one another in a common effort both to overcome selfishness and arrogance, hatred and violence, and to learn from the past that peace without justice is no true peace.

PROF. WAI HOP TONG
Taoist

We commit ourselves to taking the side of the poor and the helpless, to speaking out for those who have no voice and to working effectively to change these situations, out of the conviction that no one can be happy alone.

MOST VEN. PHRA PHOMMOLEE
Buddhist

We commit ourselves to taking up the cry of those who refuse to be resigned to violence and evil, and we desire to make every effort possible to offer the men and women of our time real hope for justice and peace.

MR. TSUNEKIYO TANAKA
Shinto – Japanese

We commit ourselves to encouraging all efforts to promote friendship between peoples, for we are convinced that, in the absence of solidarity and understanding between peoples, technological progress exposes the word to a growing risk of destruction and death.

Mrs Betty Ehrenberg
International Jewish Committee on Interreligious Consultations

We commit ourselves to urging the leaders of Nations to make every effort to create and consolidate, on the national and international levels, a world of solidarity and peace based on justice.

Rev. Dr. Setri Nyomi
World Communion of Reformed Churches

We, as persons of different religious traditions, will tirelessly proclaim that peace and justice are inseparable, and that peace in justice is the only path which humanity can take towards a future of hope. In a world with ever more open borders, shrinking distances and better relations as a result of a broad network of communications, we are convinced that security, freedom and peace will never be guaranteed by force but by mutual trust.

May God bless these our resolutions and grant justice and peace to the world.

Prof. Guillermo Hurtado
Non Believers

We, humanists in dialogue with believers, commit ourselves together with all men and women of goodwill to building a new world in which respect for the dignity of each and every person, their interior aspirations and the freedom to act on the basis of their own beliefs, is the foundation for life in society. We will make every effort to ensure that believers and non-believers in reciprocal trust can live out the shared quest for truth, justice and peace.

Pope's Pledge for Peace

There followed a moment of silence, in order for each person to be able to invoke the gift of peace or to express an earnest desire for it from deep within. At the conclusion of this moment of silence, some young people handed over to the Delegates a lighted lamp as a symbol of this desire and of the commitment to become bearers of the light of peace throughout the world.

Exchange of the Sign of Peace among the Delegates

Cardinal Kurt Koch

President of the Pontifical Council for Promoting Christian Unity

Glory, honour and peace to all who do good".

Let us become instruments of the peace that comes from above. Let us remember that there is no peace without justice; that there is no justice without forgiveness. Let us confirm with a sign of peace between us, our commitment to peace proclaimed by all. Let us bring peace to those who are near and to those who are distant, to creatures and to all creation.

During the final hymn, the Holy Father and the Heads of Delegation entered the Lower Basilica of San Francesco and went down into the Crypt for a silent visit to the Tomb of Saint Francis.

DAY OF REFLECTION, DIALOGUE AND PRAYER FOR PEACE AND JUSTICE IN THE WORLD "*PILGRIMS OF TRUTH, PILGRIMS OF PEACE*"

Holy See Press Office - Press Report
2 April 2011

"*Pilgrims of truth, pilgrims of peace*"

Day of reflection, dialogue and prayer for peace and justice in the world

Assisi, 27 October 2011

On 1 January 2011, after the Angelus, Pope Benedict XVI announced that he wished to commemorate the 25th anniversary of the historic meeting that took place in Assisi on 27 October 1986, at the wish of the Venerable Servant of God John Paul II. On the day of the anniversary, 27 October this year, the Holy Father intends to hold a *Day of reflection, dialogue and prayer for peace and justice in the world*, making a pilgrimage to the home of Saint Francis and inviting fellow Christians from different denominations, representatives of the world's religious traditions and, in some sense, all men and women of good will, to join him once again on this journey.

The Day will take as its theme: *Pilgrims of truth, pilgrims of peace*. Every human being is ultimately a pilgrim in search of truth and goodness. Believers too are constantly journeying towards God: hence the possibility, indeed the necessity, of speaking and entering into dialogue with everyone, believers and unbelievers alike, without sacrificing one's own identity or indulging in forms of syncretism. To the extent that the pilgrimage of truth is authentically lived, it opens the path to dialogue with the other, it excludes no one and it commits everyone to be a builder of fraternity and peace. These are the elements that the Holy Father wishes to place at the centre of reflection.

For this reason, as well as representatives of Christian communities and of the principal religious traditions, some figures from the world of culture and science will be invited to share the journey – people who, while not professing to be religious, regard themselves as seekers of the truth and are conscious of a shared responsibility for the cause of justice and peace in this world of ours.

The image of pilgrimage therefore sums up the meaning of the event. There will be an opportunity to look back over the path already travelled from that first meeting in Assisi to the following one in January 2002, and also to look ahead to the future, with a view to continuing, in company with all men and women of good will, to walk along the path of dialogue and fraternity, in the context of a world in rapid transformation. Saint Francis, poor and humble, will once more welcome everyone to his home town, which has become a symbol of brotherhood and peace.

The delegations will set off from Rome by train on the morning of 27 October, together with the Holy Father. Upon arrival in Assisi, they will make their way to the Basilica of *S. Maria degli Angeli*, where the previous meetings will be recalled and the theme of the Day will be explored in greater depth. Leaders of some of the delegations present will make speeches and the Holy Father will likewise deliver an address.

There will follow a simple lunch, shared by the delegates: a meal under the banner of sobriety, intended to express fraternal conviviality, and at the same time solidarity in the suffering of so many men and women who do not know peace. There will follow a period of silence for individual reflection and prayer. In the afternoon, all who are present in Assisi will make their way towards the Basilica of Saint Francis. It will be a pilgrimage in which, for the final stretch, the members of the delegations will also take part; it is intended to symbolize the journey of every human being who assiduously seeks the truth and actively builds justice and peace. It will take place in silence, leaving room for personal meditation and prayer. In the shadow of Saint Francis' Basilica, where the previous meetings were also concluded, the final stage of the Day will include a solemn renewal of the joint commitment to peace.

In preparation for this Day, Pope Benedict XVI will preside over a Prayer Vigil at Saint Peter's the previous evening, together with the faithful of the Diocese of Rome. Particular Churches and communities throughout the world are invited to organize similar times of prayer.

In the coming weeks the Cardinal Presidents of the Pontifical Councils for the Promotion of Christian Unity and of Interreligious Dialogue and the Pontifical Council for Culture will write in the Holy Father's name to all those invited. The Pope asks the Catholic faithful to join him in praying for the celebration of this important event and he is grateful to all those who will be able to be present in Saint Francis' home town to share this spiritual pilgrimage.

DAY OF REFLECTION, DIALOGUE AND PRAYER FOR PEACE AND JUSTICE IN THE WORLD "*PILGRIMS OF TRUTH, PILGRIMS OF PEACE*"

Holy See Press Office - Press Conference

18 October 2011

A Press Conference presenting the Day of reflection, dialogue, and prayer for peace and justice in the world "Pilgrims of Truth, Pilgrims of Peace" (Assisi, 27 October 2011) took place at 11.30, in the Aula Giovanni Paolo II of the Holy See Press Office.

Participating in today's conference were: Cardinal Peter Kodwo Appiah Turkson, President of the Pontifical Council for Justice and Peace; Bishop Mario Toso, S.D.B., Secretary of the same Pontifical Council; Archbishop Pier Luigi Celata, Secretary of the Pontifical Council for Inter-religious Dialogue; Fr. Andrea Palmieri, head of the Oriental Section of the Pontifical Council for Promoting Christian Unity; Msgr. Melchor Jose Sanchez de Toca y Alameda, Undersecretary of the Pontifical Council for Culture, and Fr. Jean-Marie Laurent Mazas of the Pontifical Council for Culture, Director of the "Courtyard of the Gentiles" initiative.

By calling this Day in Assisi, Benedict XVI wishes to mark the twenty-fifth anniversary of the historic meeting organised there by John Paul II in 1986. "The world today, as it did twenty-five years ago, needs peace", said Cardinal Turkson. "Following two and a half decades of collaboration and joint witness among religions, it is time to assess the results and to relaunch our commitment in the face of new challenges", he explained. Those challenges include "the financial and economic crisis which is last ing longer than expected, the crisis in democratic and social institutions, food and environmental problems, biblical-scale migrations, indirect forms of neo-colonialism, the scourge of poverty and hunger, unchecked international terrorism, and greater inequality and religious discrimination".

"Once more - and suffice to consider recent events in Egypt and other parts of the world - we must say 'no' to any exploitation of religion. Violence among religions is a scandal which distorts the true identity of religions, it obscures the face of God and distances us from the faith.

"The journey of religions towards justice and peace", the cardinal added, "must be characterised by a joint search for truth. ... Therefore Benedict XVI wishes the 2011 initiative in Assisi ... to be seen as a pilgrimage; the which implies asceticism, purification, convergence towards a more exalted place, and taking on a community responsibility".

The search for truth "is a precondition for knowing one another better, for overcoming all forms of prejudice, and of syncretism which obscures identity". It likewise helps us "to collaborate for the common good" and facilitates our "coming together on the plane of natural reason". It is a prerequisite "for defeating fanaticism and fundamentalism, according to which peace comes about by imposing one's own convictions on others", and for overcoming "the Babel of languages and the laicism which seeks to remove from the human family the One Who is its Beginning and End".

Turning to consider the programme of events for the Day, the cardinal explained that the various delegations will leave Rome by train on 27 October, in the company of the Holy Father. Having arrived in Assisi, they will make their way to the Basilica of Santa Maria degli Angeli, where the delegations will recall the previous meetings there and explore the theme of the Day in greater depth. The Holy Father will also deliver an address. That afternoon, those present in will make a "pilgrimage" to the Basilica of St. Francis, being joined on the last stage by the members of the delegations. Having reached the basilica, everyone will make a solemn renewal of their joint commitment to peace.

More than fifty nations will be represented in Assisi. They will include, apart from many European and American countries, Egypt, Israel, Pakistan, Jordan, Iran, Saudi Arabia, Philippines and many others. "Those which, at this moment in history, perhaps suffer most from problems associated with religious freedom and dialogue between religions", Cardinal Turkson observed.

For his part, Msgr. Melchor Jose Sanchez de Toca y Alameda, under secretary of the Pontifical Council for Culture, pointed out that the Pope has, for the first time, also invited non-believers to a religious meeting. "This innovative idea of the Holy Father's", he said, "is based on the conviction that men and women, both believers and non-believers, are always searching for God, for the Absolute, and that they are, therefore, all pilgrims travelling towards the fullness of truth".

The Pope's invitation to participate in the Day has been accepted by the French linguist, psychoanalyst, philosopher and writer Julia Kristeva; the Italian philosopher Remo Bodei; the Mexican philosopher Guillermo Hurtado, and the Austrian economist Walter Baier.

An English translation of Cardinal Turkson's and Msgr. Celata's text is here reported.

Intervention by H. Em. Card. Peter Kodwo Appiah Turkson

.... Last January 1st, at the end of the Angelus prayer, Pope Benedict XVI announced his desire to solemnly commemorate the 25th anniversary of the historic encounter held in Assisi on 27 October 1986, called for by Blessed John Paul

II. On the anniversary of this occasion, the Holy Father will convoke next October 27th, a Day of Reflection, Dialogue and Prayer for justice and peace in the world, placing himself as a pilgrim in the city of St. Francis, inviting once more our Christian brothers and sisters of various confessions, believers of the different religious traditions in the world, and, ideally, men and women of good will, to join him as pilgrims.

The Day will have the theme of "Pilgrims of Truth, Pilgrims of Peace". The point of the day – as Benedict XVI reminded us in Germany in the meeting with the Muslim Community on last September 23rd - is to show , with simplicity, that religious men and women and persons of good will, wish to offer their own contribution for the construction of a better world, recognizing at the same time the need, in order to be effective, to grow in dialogue and reciprocal esteem.

Even today, as was true also 25 years ago, the world has a need for peace. It needs men and women who are sensitive to religious values, together with persons who, although non-believers, love that which is good, to find once again the desire to walk together. The upcoming meeting in Assisi intends, therefore, to continue the fraternal experience that was lived and tested in 1986. It hopes to be a dream that continues and becomes always more a reality: one person together with another, no longer one against another: all the peoples marching together from different points of the earth, to come together in one family.

Following two and a half decades of collaboration and joint witness among religions, the time has come to assess the results of this process and to relaunch our commitment in the face of new challenges. Those challenges include the financial and economic crisis which has lasted much longer than anyone expected; the crisis in democratic and social institutions; food and environmental problems; biblical-scale migrations of persons; indirect forms of neo-colonialism; the scourge of poverty and hunger; unchecked international terrorism; and an increasing inequality and religious discrimination.

Once more - and it suffices only to consider recent events in Egypt and other parts of the world - we must say 'no' to any exploitation of religion. Violence among religions is a scandal which distorts the true identity of religion; it obscures the face of God and distances us from faith.

The journey of religions towards justice and peace, as it is a primary commitment of a conscience that yearns for truth and goodness, must be characterized by a joint search for truth.

Peace needs the truth found in peoples, states, the religions themselves. It needs as well the truth of the corresponding cultures, in which often lurk elements inconsistent with the truth about man, which can become obstacles to integral development of peoples and peace.

Therefore Benedict XVI wishes the 2011 initiative in Assisi to be seen, not only as a as a sign of prayer and fasting, but as a pilgrimage; this implies asceticism, purification, convergence towards a more exalted place, taking on a community responsibility. The truth allows us to be freer and more able to build peace together.

The search for truth is a precondition for knowing one another better, for overcoming all forms of prejudice, and of syncretism which obscures identity. To participate together in a common journey in search of truth means to recognize one's own specificity, which at base makes us equal – we are all capable of truth – and at the same time different. Not everyone, in fact, possesses the truth in the same way; to have it, that is receive it as gift, does not prevent us from deepening it nor recognizing ourselves as companions in the journey of every man and woman, because truth is never exhausted.

To search for the truth sincerely and humbly means to renew one's attitude of benevolence before others, to mutually accept each other, to better dialogue and collaborate for the common good; it is not always possible to come together on a theological or doctrinal plane, but the dialogue on the level of life and work seems to be much easier.

The search for truth is a prerequisite for defeating fanaticism and fundamentalism, where peace comes about by imposing one's own convictions on others; it is at the same time the means for overcoming the Babel of languages and the laicism which seeks to remove from the human family the One Who is its Beginning and End.

Finally, the search for truth is the introduction to a moral rebirth in persons and institutions.

A theoretical knowledge of peace is not enough. It needs a mobilization of the spirit, a search for new avenues, for good practices, of gestures and institutions that can be put into action through positive relations and an openness of conscience to the Highest Truth and the Highest Good, God: an openness that is written in the spirit of those who are atheists, because every longing for the good is a ray of that Word or "Sun" (God) who one does not fully know and to whom one inevitably reaches out thanks to the gift of the same Creator.

In the direction of the Day of Assisi 2011 Secretaries of the various Pontifical Councils will be involved who together with the Pontifical Council for Justice and Peace have received the responsibility to organize this event. I will now present only in general outline the details of the Day, which will take place on October 26th, instead of the Wednesday Audience, by the Liturgy of the Word, to take place in St. Peter's Square by Benedict XVI at 10:30 am Besides the usual pilgrims participate, the Diocese of Rome, in particular which will also gather, with its rich variety of charisms and ministries, associations and movement, around the person

of the Successor of Peter to invoke the Lord to send abundant good fruits for all of humanity from the Day in Assisi.

Regarding the programme of events for the Day, the various delegations will leave Rome by train on 27 October, in the company of the Holy Father. The train will stop in Terni, Spoleto and Foligno, allowing these local Churches to show their participation and solidarity with this initiative of Benedict XVI by coming to the stations. On arriving in Assisi, they will make their way to the Basilica of Mary of the Angels, where there will be a moment of commemoration recalling the previous meetings there and exploration of the theme of the Day in greater depth. At this point there will be interventions by some of the Delegations present and also the Holy Father will deliver an address.

The delegates will eat a frugal lunch together: a meal in the name of sobriety, which is intended to express the coming together in brotherhood and, at the same time, participation in the suffering of so many men and women who do not know peace. Then there will be a period of silence, for individual reflection and prayer.

That afternoon, those present in Assisi will participate in a procession that will wind its way towards the Basilica of St. Francis. It will be a pilgrimage joined at the last stage by the members of the delegations; it is intended to symbolize the journey of every human being in the diligent search for the truth and in the construction of effective justice and peace. It will be carried out in silence, leaving space for prayer and personal meditation. In the shadow of the Basilica of St Francis, where the previous days concluded, the final moment of the day will take place with everyone making a solemn renewal of their joint commitment to peace.

More than fifty nations will be represented in Assisi. They will include, apart from many European and American countries, Egypt, Israel, Pakistan, Jordan, Iran, Saudi Arabia, Philippines and many others, those which perhaps, at this moment in history, suffer most from problems associated with religious freedom and dialogue between religions.

The Catholic delegates (a total of 13 among which are the presidents of regional Episcopal Conferences, patriarchs and major archbishops of the *Sui Iuris* Churches) will be represented on the stage by the Holy Father, and will be seated not on the stage but in a section reserved for bishops.

In Assisi, the heads of the Delegations who will be on the stage with the Holy Father in the afternoon in St. Francis Square will receive, at the close of the Day, a lamp which will be symbolically lit (light = symbol of religion which illumines the paths of an in the search for the way to peace).

Finally I would like to thank the many volunteers who have been working for the success of this event and all the institutions whose generosity is enabling a more effective organization.

Intervention by H. E. Msgr. Pier Luigi Celata

Not just a few problems emerging in the concrete life of our society are challenging, in a specific way, but above all in particular the different religious traditions, where they have or claim a public space. We can think of the problems posed by immigration: the acceptance of the other, the respect for his diversity, in particular religious and cultural; the dignity of each human person and the rights-duties that derive from it, like the those concerning religious freedom: the fundamental equality of all men; the value of family; the role of religion in civil society; and further more: the sacredness of human life, in every stage. But also – as presented by His Eminence Card. Turkson – those questions that concern, in its most common meaning, social justice.

All these and more are challenging the followers of the different religions, and requiring them to search for some elements of solutions, in light of reason and their respective traditions.

It is clear that the attention of civil society can be stirred depending on their capacity to propose something. Ultimately their credibility depends on their capacity to serve man in the totality of his dignity.

It is clear, in this context, there is a need for encounter, dialogue and common commitment because, in a world that is racing towards globalization, different religions, with their specific resources, can meet the expectations for the promotion of certain authentic human values.

Hence the importance and relevance of the coming Day of Reflection in Assisi desired by the Holy Father: to be pilgrims together, to reflect, through listening and silence; to meet with one another in a spirit of dialogue; to pray, each according to its own tradition: to revive a common commitment to serve man in his basic demands for justice and peace among nations and within each society.

As for the participation in the next Day of Reflection, I can now share that, to date, 176 representatives of various non-Christian and non-Jewish religious traditions have confirmed their presence.

I wish to say, first of all, that we are expecting four leaders representing the Traditional Religions of Africa, America and India. The representative of the Indian religious tradition is participating for the first time in the Assisi Day. The African Prof. *Wone Abimbola* will offer a reflection on the theme of the Day.

With regard to the religions associated with the Indian sub-continent, the following people have accepted the invitation of the Holy Father:

- 5 Hindus representatives with two companions. Among them is Prof. Rajhmoon Gandhi, nephew of Mahatma Gandhi, who previously participated in the Day in 1986;
- 3 Jains;

- 5 Sikhs;
- 1 Zoroastrian;
- 1 Bahai, who for the first time there will attend a Day in Assisi.

For other religions of Asian origins, there were the following confirmations of participation:

- 67 Buddhists, including 16 heads of delegation from 11 countries:

a) one group from South Korea, Sri Lanka, Myanmar, Cambodia, India (Tibetan), Singapore, mainland China (for the first time), Taiwan and Australia;

b) two groups from Thailand and five delegations from Japan.

The President of the Association of Confucianism is also expected to attend, together with two companions, from South Korea.

From Hong Kong the President of the Association of Taoism will come, with two companions.

Two Shinto delegations from Japan have confirmed their presence, with a total of 17 participants.

Among the New Religions of Japan can be registered representatives of four denominations for a total of 13 people.

The participation of Muslims was undoubtedly influenced by several factors, both in terms of number and level of representation, such as the socio-political situation in several Arab countries with a strong Muslim majority in the Middle East, North Africa and the Gulf.

The event in Assisi also nearly coincided with the pilgrimage to Mecca and the inter-annual Conference in Doha, Qatar.

From the Arab countries and the Middle East, and from Western countries 48 Muslims are expected, namely from : Jordan, Israel, Egypt, Lebanon, Algeria, Morocco, Iran, Turkey, Arabia Saudi Arabia, Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Azerbaijan, from Tajikistan, the United Kingdom, France, Italy, Portugal, the United States of America.

Among the leaders coming from these countries, precisely from Azerbaijan, it is important to note that the Sheick ul-Islam Allahshukur Pashazade, Chairman of the Board of Muslims of the Caucasus will be there.

It should also be pointed out that a representative of the King of Saudi Arabia and Custodian of the two Holy Mosques will be present: i.e, the Deputy Minister of Education, H.E. Muammar Al Faisal and Acting Secretary General of the "King Abdullah Bin Abdulaziz International Centre for Interreligious and Intercultural Dialogue" just established in Wien; a representative of the King of Morocco, the Minister of the Pious Foundations and Islamic Affairs, Prof. Ahmad Tawfiq and a Member of the royal Family of Jordan, Prince Ghazi bin Muhammad.

One can see that from the previous days of Assisi to the present there has been a growing participation of Muslims: 11 in 1986, 32 in 2002, 50 this year.

From the countries of South and South-East Asia with a Muslim majority (which comprise 60% of Muslims in the world), 5 important leaders have confirmed their participation, accompanied by seven Muslim members from: Pakistan, Bangladesh, Thailand and Indonesia.

From the latter, in particular, which has the largest number of Muslims in the world (about 190 million) representatives of the two largest and most influential Muslim organizations: the "Muhammadiyah" and "Nahdlatul Ulama." Mr. Nasihin Hasan, Executive Director of the International Conference of Muslim Academicians, born from an initiative of the "Nahdlatul Ulama", are expected and will offer a testimony on the theme of the Day.

VISIT OF THE PONTIFICAL COUNCIL FOR INTERRELIGIOUS DIALOGUE TO INDIA

6-13 NOVEMBER 2011

REPORT

As an on-going effort to strengthen Catholic Church's relationships with the adherents of other religious traditions particularly with the Hindus, Sikhs and Jains in India, the Pontifical Council for interreligious dialogue (PCID), in collaboration with the Church in India, organized a series of interreligious programs from 6th to 13th November. H. Em. Card. Jean-Louis Tauran, H. Ex. Pier Luigi Celata, President and Secretary respectively of the PCID accompanied by Father Santiago Michael, official, Desk for Hinduism, Jainism and Sikhism participated in these events.

Meeting with Muslim representatives: The programs began with an informal meeting, on 6th morning, with some important Muslim leaders in Mumbai among whom where four eminent Maulanas and MLA Abu Azmi. This meeting, facilitated by H.Em. Card. Oswald Gracias, Archbishop of Mumbai was held in the Archbishop's House. Some priests of the Archdiocese engaged in interreligious dialogue activities too attended this meeting. Greeting the Muslims, at the very outset, on the occasion of Bakrid celebrated the next day, H. Em. Card. Tauran spelt out three values that are fundamental in interreligious dialogue, namely: the quest for fidelity to the identity of the follower of each religion, the respect for the otherness of the believers of other religions, and the absolute sincerity with which one needs to engage in interreligious dialogue. His Eminence then reflected upon some of the issues of common concern affecting the society today. Lamenting the evil effects of globalization, he expressed the hope that we "can solve these problems if we are true to our spiritual identity, don't regard the other as an enemy, and take steps to strengthen what unites us". In his intervention, His Grace Archbishop Celata explored the dimension of respect for human dignity with all its rights and duties so essential for nurturing and strengthening interreligious relationships. In broad agreement with their reflections, the Muslim leaders called for greater cooperation between Muslims and Christians. Pointing to the incidents of burqa-ban, drawing of cartoons Prophet Mohammad and burning of Quran in some parts of the world, they appealed to the Christian community to ensure that the sentiments of Muslims are respected and safeguarded. The meeting ended with H. Em. Cardinal Oswald Gracias wishing all the Muslims, a Happy Bakrid.

Hindu- Catholic Colloquium: *Jnana Deepa Vidyapeeth* (JDV), the Pontifical Institute for Philosophy and Religion, Pune was the venue of a 3-day Hindu-Catholic colloquium from 6th to 9th. H. Ex. Most Rev. Thomas Dabre, Bishop of Poona and a Member of this Dicastery was the local organizer. Fifty persons, twenty five each from either side, consisting of religious leaders and scholars from across the country participated in the first ever such a meeting organized by this Dicastery with the Hindus. Inaugurating the colloquium, H. Em. Cardinal Tauran affirmed that religions are channels of peace and not of conflict and division. But unfortunately there has been tendency among some vested interests to create distrust between communities in the name of religion, he added. Calling upon religious leaders and adherents of both the religions to recognize what is 'true, good and holy' in each other's religions, he exhorted them to promote a culture of mutual trust and solidarity to defeat divisive forces and to foster love, justice and peace. Swami Srikantananda of Ramakrishna Mission Mutt (monastery), Pune who also spoke on this occasion said that "each must assimilate the spirit of the other and yet preserve his individuality and grow in the service of others". Msgr. Dabre stressed that in a multi –religious and multi-cultural country like India, interreligious dialogue must become a way of life.

The general theme of the colloquium was '*Enhancing Hindu-Christian relations and collaboration to promote justice, peace and harmony*'. It was divided into 7 sub-themes, each one treated by scholars from either side from their own respective religious perspectives. The sub-themes were: 1) Interreligious Dialogue: An answer to the present-day situation 2) The dignity of the human person 3) The dignity of woman 4) Relationship between religion and society 5) Religion and family 6) Religion and poverty: An engagement for justice and peace and 7) Religion and environment. More than an academic exercise, it was a live-together for three days where free and frank exchange of ideas took place clearing many of the mutual misconceptions and paving way for a unified vision to collaborate for justice and peace. A visit to Ramakrishna Mission Temple and a brief interaction with the inmates of the Mutt, during the course of this colloquium, also helped in furthering a spirit of understanding and appreciation among the participants. Earlier, the participants were accorded a warm welcome at the Kasturba Gandhi Memorial, the final resting place of Mahatma Gandhi's wife Kasturba, in the premises of Agakhan Palace where Gandhi along with his wife and secretary had to spend two years of imprisonment at the height of Indian freedom movement. H. Em. Card. Tauran inaugurated the Centre for Applied Ethics and Centre for religion and science studies as well at the Papal Athenaeum, whose activities are envisaged to be human, religious and interreligious ones. The conclusions of the colloquium are as follows:

The Hindu-Christian meeting on "*Enhancing Relations and Collaboration for Justice, Peace and Harmony*" was held at *Jnana Deepa Vidyapeeth*, Pune, India from Nov. 6-9, 2011. It was organized by the Pontifical Council for Inter-Religious Dialogue with the active collaboration of the Diocese of Poona, India.

The Vatican Delegation consisted of His Eminence, Jean-Louis Cardinal Tauran, His Excellency Archbishop Pier Luigi Celata and Rev. Fr. Santiago Michael.

The event which gathered about fifty religious leaders and scholars representing the two religions from different parts of India, took place in an atmosphere of freedom, respect and cordiality. This initiative was aimed at further enhancing the mutual relations and the spirit of collaboration in order to bring about a change in the present human and social situation marked by stress and tension and exacerbated by fundamentalism, extremism and terrorism. India is the hub and meeting-place of most of the major religions whose religious leaders are highly respected by all. They, therefore, have a unique role to play in promoting true justice, peace and harmony.

The Assembly deemed that laudable efforts have been made to freely discuss and clarify concepts and values in the two religious traditions and literature concerning the key issues that plague the Indian society today. Important as discussion, exchange and sharing of views and experiences are in themselves, however, we were convinced of the necessity to strive to translate our values, ideals and aspirations into life and concrete realities. In a climate of collaborative relations, the assembly therefore agreed on the key points and suggested that:

1) All religious groups make a better use of the modern means of communication to spread important human and social values in society.

2) A committee be appointed to propose a proper syllabus for young students which includes moral and spiritual values as well as the spirit of inter-religious dialogue.

3) The human person has a unique dignity by his/her very nature which makes him/her perform an irreplaceable role in the universe. Hence while spirituality and religious commitment are eminently personal there is also a social dimension that needs to be respected.

4) This dignity and respect should not remain only at the level of ideas but should be guaranteed by concrete measures. In view of the fact that many in society today are insensitive to the dignity and the needs of others, it was deemed necessary that all must work together in the service of humanity, especially in defending the dignity of the human person.

5) All religions teach the partnership between men and women and the vital role that women have in society. While acknowledging the services of women for the welfare of humanity, they must be given more opportunities.

6) Since, "family is the fundamental cell of society" (UNDHR, Art 16) the paramount importance of family for human society was underlined. Family, as a community of love and life, of a man and a woman open to life, is integral to every religious group. Marriage is also sacred for religious groups which are convinced that children must be prepared from young age to face life through adequate education.

7) No one would deny that spirituality is essential for human well-being. While recognizing that religions are different, the differences have to be respected and the freedom of religion safeguarded.

8) All must collaborate more effectively to bring about peace and justice for all dalits (the oppressed) and the tribal community and positive and serious efforts should be made to eradicate hurtful and demeaning differences.

9) Such inter-religious meetings could be held more frequently and in different prominent cities in India.

10) Our religious traditions and texts need to be looked at afresh. Earnest efforts should be made to ensure that the most important messages of our religions be credible. In particular:

- protection and safeguard of natural resources;
- promotion of the ecological balance and integrity of nature often jeopardized by erroneous use of modern science and technology.

Trusting in the power and providence of God and deriving strength from all our very positive and encouraging experiences of inter-religious dialogue we move steadily forward towards *"Enhancing Hindu-Christian relations and collaboration for Justice Peace and Harmony."*

Multi-religious gathering: '*In the spirit of Assisi: Believers builders of peace*' was the theme of the multi-religious gathering at Vigyan Bhavan, New Delhi on 10th. The Catholic Bishops' Conference of India and the Archdiocese of Delhi joined hands with the PCID in organizing this event. Representatives from nine religions namely Bahai, Buddhism, Christianity, Hinduism, Jainism, Judaism, Islam, Sikhism and Zoroastrianism, sharing their views on the theme from their respective religious perspectives, were unanimous on the need to work together for peace and harmony especially today when peace is disturbed and destroyed in so many ways. Addressing the gathering, the Chief Guest, Mr. Salman Khurshid, Minister for Law and Minority Affairs, Govt. of India appreciated the efforts of the Church in bringing together people of diverse religions and said "Peace is a human concern; ours is a dialogical society; this interreligious meet at the National level can foster dialogue at all levels especially in families". In his keynote address, H. Em. Cardinal Tauran, praised the efforts made in India, by various organizations, both

religious and secular, to build peace and harmony. Evoking "the spirit of Assisi", he said that "the human family can and must work for peace and harmony". He advocated for many more such initiatives to build together peace. Earlier, H.Em. Card. Oswald Gracias, President of the Catholic Bishops' Conference of India (CBCI) extended, in the name of the Catholic Church in India, a warm welcome to both H.Em. Card. Tauran and H.Ex. Archbishop Celata. H. Ex. Mar George Alenchery, Major Archbishop of Syro Malabar Church, H. Ex. Salvatore Pennacchio, Apostolic Nuncio in India, H.Ex. Albert D'Souza, Archbishop of Agra and Secretary General of the CBCI and H. Ex. Mar Barnabas, Bishop Extra-territorium of the Syro-Malankara Church were among the notables present on this occasion. Incidentally, this day was the birth anniversary of Sri Guru Nanak Dev, the founder of Sikhism. H.Em. Card. Tauran greeted the Sikh community on this occasion.

Sikh- Catholic seminar: On the 11th, the Vatican delegation, that included also H. Ex. Most Rev. Thomas Dabre, H. Ex. Salvatore Pennacchio, Apostolic Nuncio in India, H.Ex. Most Rev. Anil Joseph Thomas Couto, Bishop of Jalandhar and H.Ex. Most Rev. Peter Celestine, Bishop of Jammu-Kashmir visited the Golden Temple, the most important temple of the Sikhs, in Amritsar, the Seat of Sikhism. The delegation was received by Giani Gurbachan Singh, the Chief Priest of the Siri Akal Takht Sahib and office-bearers of the Shiromani Gurdwara Prabandhak Committee (Sikh Community Parliament). Being the very next day of Guru Nanak Jayanti, there were a large number of Sikh devotees at the temple premises.

Thanking Giani Gurbachan Singh and others for the cordial welcome accorded to the delegation, H.Em. Card. Tauran said, "Though we belong to two different religions, we believe in the fatherhood of God and brotherhood of all human beings". And as such, "we are called anew to work together, particularly during these times when our shared ideals and values stand threatened".

"Enhancing Sikh-Catholic Dialogue for World Peace" was the theme of the seminar organized, the next day, at the Guru Nanak Dev University, Amritsar facilitated by H.Ex. Most Rev. Anil Joseph Thomas Couto, the Bishop of the local diocese, Jalandhar. Religious leaders and scholars from both the communities participated in the seminar. Papers were presented by scholars from either side that drove home the point that there are many areas of life where both the Sikhs and Catholics can work together for the common good. Mr. Sukhbir Singh Badal, the Deputy Chief Minister of the State of Punjab who paid an unscheduled visit to the venue, extended a warm welcome, on behalf of the local government, to both H.Em. Card. Tauran and H.Ex. Archbishop Celata. In his brief address, he said, "In the mad race for power,

human beings forget the core value of mental and social peace. Our Gurus have taught us to shun discrimination of human beings and treat every individual equally". He appreciated the initiative of the PCID in organizing the event with the active collaboration of the diocese of Jalandhar and Guru Nanak Dev University. H. Em. Card. Tauran, in his concluding remarks, said, "We are all children of God and we must learn to accept individualities of every religion. Every religion gives the message of universal brotherhood and peaceful coexistence and seminars and conferences like this one can help reduce mutual trust deficit between different religions". Earlier, Prof. A.S. Brar, the Vice-Chancellor of the University welcomed the guests and other participants. Giani Joginder Singh Vedanti, the former Chief Priest of the Akal Takht Sahib who had visited the PCID and participated in the Assisi Prayer Meet in 2002, also graced this occasion with his benign presence.

Jain-Catholic seminar: There were two Jain- related programs in Delhi on the 13th: 1) visit to a Jain Temple and meeting with some Jain leaders 2) Jain-Catholic seminar at Acharya Sushil Muni Ashram. H.Em. Card. Telesphore Toppo, Archbishop of Ranchi H.Ex. Most Rev. Thomas Dabre, both Members of the PCID along with H. Ex. Most Rev. Salvatore Pennacchio as well as H.Ex. Vincent Concessao and H. Ex. Franco Mulakkal, Archbishop and Auxiliary Bishop respectively of Delhi Archdiocese joined these programs. The seminar was organized in collaboration with the Catholic Bishops' Conference of India, the Archdiocese of Delhi and World Fellowship of Religions, a Jain organization headed by Acharya Sadhana Sadhvi, a Jain Nun. Papers were presented by scholars from both the sides that focused on existent similarities in both the religions. Speaking on the occasion, H.Em. Card. Tauran said, "As Christians, we believe that life is very precious and Jainism too upholds the sanctity of life and urges its promotion and protection... our vocation to promote respect for life, non-violence, peace and harmony in today's world brings us together with the common bond of mutual affection for each other". He called upon all the protagonists of politics, economics and social communications to do everything in their power "to promote a culture which respects life". Welcoming the participants earlier, Acharya Sadhana Sadhvi stated that no religion teaches hatred or violence. "We need to bring about, first and foremost, change in our individual selves; we have to shun ego, violence and hatred from within ourselves, only then we will be able to bring about a change in the world".

At a reception hosted that evening by the Apostolic Nuncio, in his honour, at the Nunciature, H.Em. Card. Tauran released a book titled 'John Paul II: A Pilgrim on the Roads of the World" authored by Sr. Teresa Joseph FMA, Executive Secretary of the CBCI Commission for Interreligious Dialogue. The function was

attended by a good number of Ambassadors of different countries besides the Church hierarchy and distinguished persons of the society.

Apart from these interreligious activities, the top officials of the Vatican also had the "feel" of the tiny yet vibrant local Church in India when they celebrated the Holy Eucharist, along with other bishops and priests, at the Holy Name Cathedral, Mumbai, Christ the King Church and St. Patrick's Cathedral, Pune, St. Francis' Church, Amritsar and Sacred Cathedral, Delhi where they had the opportunity to interact with the faithful as well.

MESSAGE TO MUSLIMS FOR THE END OF RAMADAN*

Christians and Muslims: Working Together for Mankind's Spiritual Dimension

Vatican City, 19 August 2011

Dear Muslim friends,

The end of the month of Ramadan offers the Pontifical Council for Interreligious Dialogue a welcome occasion for sending you our most cordial wishes, hoping that the efforts you have so generously made during this month will bring all the desired spiritual fruits.

This year, we have thought to give priority to the theme of *the spiritual dimension of the human person.* This concerns a reality which Christians and Muslims consider to be of prime importance, faced as we are with the challenges of materialism and secularisation. The relationship that every human person has with the transcendent is not a moment in history, but is part of human nature. We do not believe in fate; we are convinced – moreover it is our experience – that God guides us on our path!

Christians and Muslims, beyond their differences, recognise the dignity of the human person endowed with both rights and duties. They think that intelligence and freedom are indeed gifts which must impel believers to recognise these values which are shared because they rest on the same human nature.

This is why the transmission of such human and moral values to the younger generations constitutes a common concern. It is our duty to help them discover that there is both good and evil, that conscience is a sanctuary to be respected, and that cultivating the spiritual dimension makes us more responsible, more supportive, more available for the common good.

* For the original text and translation, see: *http://www.vatican.va/roman_curia/pontifical_councils/interelg/documents/rc_pc_interelg_doc_20110819_ramadan2011_en.pdf*

Christians and Muslims are too often witnesses to the violation of the sacred, of the mistrust of which those who call themselves believers are the target. We cannot but denounce all forms of fanaticism and intimidation, the prejudices and the polemics, as well as the discrimination of which, at times, believers are the object both in the social and political life as well as in the mass media.

We are spiritually very close to you, dear Friends, asking God to give you renewed spiritual energy and we send you our very best wishes for peace and happiness.

Jean-Louis Cardinal TAURAN
President

Archbishop Pier Luigi CELATA
Secretary

MESSAGE TO HINDUS FOR THE FEAST OF DEEPAVALI 2011*

Christians and Hindus: Together In Promoting Religious Freedom

Vatican City, 20 October 2011

Dear Hindu Friends,

The Pontifical Council for Interreligious Dialogue is pleased to send you its cordial greetings as you celebrate Deepavali on 26 October of this year. May God, the source of all light, illumine your hearts, homes and communities for a life of peace and prosperity.

Maintaining our tradition of sharing a reflection on this occasion, we propose this year the theme of Religious Freedom. This subject is currently taking centre stage in many places, calling our attention to those members of our human family exposed to bias, prejudice, hate propaganda, discrimination and persecution on the basis of religious affiliation. Religious freedom is the answer to religiously motivated conflicts in many parts of the world. Amid the violence triggered by these conflicts, many desperately yearn for peaceful coexistence and integral human development.

Religious freedom is numbered among the fundamental human rights rooted in the dignity of the human person. When it is jeopardized or denied, all other human rights are endangered. Religious freedom necessarily includes immunity from coercion by any individual, group, community or institution. Though the exercise of this right entails the freedom of every person to profess, practise and propagate his or her religion or belief, in public or in private, alone or in a community, it also involves a serious obligation on the part of civil authorities, individuals and groups to respect the freedom of others. Moreover, it includes the freedom to change one's own religion.

When respected and promoted, religious freedom allows believers to be more enthusiastic about cooperating with their fellow citizens in the building of a just and humane social order. But wherever and whenever it is denied, suppressed or violated, "the growth of the authentic and lasting peace of the whole human family" is stifled and frustrated (cf. Pope Benedict XVI, *Message for the World Day of*

* For the original text and translation, see: *http://www.vatican.va/roman_curia/pontifical_councils/interelg/documents/rc_pc_interelg_doc_20111020_diwali_en.html*

Peace, 2011). There are many fields in which a specific contribution can be made to the common good, such as the defence of life and the dignity of the family, the sound education of children, honesty in daily conduct, and the preservation of natural resources, to name a few. Let us strive, then, to join hands in promoting religious freedom as our shared responsibility, by asking the leaders of nations never to disregard the religious dimension of the human person.

The very day after you celebrate Deepavali this year, many religious leaders from across the globe will join Pope Benedict XVI in a Pilgrimage to Assisi to renew the pledge made twenty-five years ago, under the leadership of Blessed John Paul II, to make religions channels of peace and harmony. We will be spiritually united with them, confident that believers will always be a blessing for the whole world.

We cordially wish you a joyful celebration of Deepavali.

Jean-Louis Cardinal Tauran
President

Archbishop Pier Luigi Celata
Secretary

MESSAGE TO SIKHS ON THE OCCASION OF THE BIRTH ANNIVERSARY OF SIRI GURU NANAK SAHIB ON 10 NOVEMBER 2011

Christians And Sikhs: Working Together in Building a Harmonious Society

Vatican City, 29 October 2011

Dear Sikh Friends,

The Pontifical Council for Interreligious Dialogue most cordially greets you all as you commemorate the Birth Anniversary of Siri Guru Nanak Sahib on 10th November this year. May the celebration of this feast be an occasion to enhance harmony, happiness and unity within your families and communities.

Festive events such as this offer the opportunity to believers to expand the horizons of our relatedness with the larger human family by furthering our reach out and seeking to work together ever more earnestly for the welfare of the society, most especially towards building a harmonious society.

A harmonious society, as largely desired across the globe, is a people oriented society wherein persons are truly respected in their transcendent, innate human dignity and whose common aspirations for freedom, serenity, security and equal opportunity for development are governed by a morally sound set of values that animates the life of the individuals and of the entire society. On the contrary, moral relativism, which undermines human being in his/her objective dignity, will only render the aspiration for a harmonious society an evanescent dream. Pope Benedict XVI spoke of it in unequivocal words saying, "the illusion that moral relativism provides the way for peaceful coexistence is ...the origin of divisions and the denial of the dignity of the human beings"(*Message for the World Day of Peace*, 2011).

We believers, more than others, because of our openness to God, are called upon to reject whatever is contrary to the dignity of the human persons and to make coordinated and sustained efforts to protect the legitimate interests of everyone in society. On us, therefore, falls the responsibility to render the human yearn-

ing for a harmonious society a reality. Our shared values such as fraternity, honesty, justice and unity are powerful tools for building a better world.

Wishing you a Happy Prakash Divas of Siri Guru Nanak Sahib!

Jean-Louis Cardinal TAURAN
President

Archbishop Pier Luigi CELATA
Secretary

Dialogue Interreligieux Monastique (DIM-MID) : 40. Réunion des commissions de la Région Européenne

Saint Jacques de Compostelle, 29 août - 2 Septembre de 2011

La 40ème réunion de la Commission européenne du DIM-MID s'est tenue à l'abbaye bénédictine de San Pelayo, Saint Jacques de Compostelle, du 29 août au 2 Septembre de 2011[1].

Les rapports des différents pays européens représentés manifestent une fois encore la vitalité du dialogue poursuivi très localement. Les brefs comptes rendus des commissions nationales en donnent un aperçu significatif.

Pour nous introduire au thème du pèlerinage opportunément choisi cette année, le Dr. Marcelino Agis, anthropologue à l'université de Santiago, l'a présenté comme phénomène anthropologique de la pérégrination, dont le but est la rencontre avec le sacré, et dans le cas du christianisme, la rencontre avec Dieu, la foi apparaissant comme « moteur » du chemin. La pérégrination peut être perçue comme métaphore philosophique pour appréhender le sens de l'existence humaine et de sa propre existence. Elle est présente dans toutes les cultures et toutes les religions. Au Portail Sud de la Cathédrale de Santiago, nommé la « Puerta de las Platerias », une sculpture de la fin du 11ième siècle : « Omega et Alpha » (et non Alpha et Omega) à une portée théologique, dont le sens est clair. Parvenu à Santiago après avoir parcouru le chemin, un autre chemin commence pour le pèlerin, le chemin intérieur, le chemin de la Foi, vers la Cité Céleste ! Un chanoine de

[1] Etaient réunis : P. William Skudlarek osb secrétaire général de DIM/MID ; P. Ramon Oranias Monserrat, (commission ibérique), Sr GilChrist Lavigne ocso Tautra, Norvège, (commission nordique) ; Sr Bénédicte Vanhoomissen osb Loppem; (commission néerlandophone), fr. Matteo Nicolini de la communauté de Bose (commission italienne); Sr Marie Pinlou Urt, (commission française), Sr. Lucy Brydon osb Turvey abbey GB (commission anglaise); P. Cosmas Hoffmann Königsmünster (commission germanophone) ; Mª Blanca Blanco San Pelayo abbesse à saint Jacques de Compostelle, Griselda Cos, Puiggraciós ; Sr Maria Reis Catarino, Escolástica.Portugal; Rosa Mª de la Parra, Sant Pere de les Puel ; Sr. Samuel osb Martigné Briand ; Fr. Daniel Pont osb En Calcat, France (coordinateur européen).

la cathédrale, responsable de la pastorale des pèlerins de Santiago, a détaillé les chiffres impressionnants de pèlerins ou assimilés relevés au fil des ans. Il nous fit remarquer que pour obtenir la *Credencial*, au terme du Chemin, on ne demande pas à quelle religion appartient le pèlerin, mais seulement s'il a la Foi. Seule la Foi compte, qu'elle soit chrétienne, musulmane juive, bouddhiste, hindoue etc.

-Le dialogue monastique avec des musulmans chiites iraniens, organisé par le DIMMID, a eu lieu à l'Abbaye primatiale de Saint Anselme à Rome du 14 au 18 septembre 2011, avec dix moines ou moniales chrétiens et dix musulman(e)s chiites. Il devrait se poursuivre en Iran fin 2012, si la situation internationale le permet.

La numérisation de l'intégralité des archives de Henri le Saux a été réalisée à Delhi, en février 2012. Les chercheurs pourront disposer très facilement des 8000 pages et photographies qui étaient difficiles d'accès jusqu'à présent.

La prochaine réunion des commissions européennes se tiendra à la Communauté de Bose, Italie, les 2-4 octobre 2012.

Panorama des commissions européennes

Allemagne

La rencontre du groupe germano-turque de Paderborn à Meschede le 22.01.11, était centrée la prière dans les deux religions et la présentation du film « Des hommes et des dieux » dans un cinéma à Paderborn, à laquelle 850 personnes assistèrent, dont beaucoup de frères religieux, qui a donné lieu à une discussion très animée sur le dialogue islamo- chrétien.

Le cercle de travail sur le dialogue entre chrétiens et bouddhistes existe depuis déjà six ans. Il comprend les représentants des diocèses de la Rhénanie du Nord-Westphalie de Cologne, Paderborn et Aix-la-Chapelle. Il a rendu visite au monastère européen de la communauté de Thich Nhat Hanh « European Institute of Applied Buddhism » (EIAB) à Waldbröl .

Du 15 au 17.07.2011 eut lieu le 4ème dialogue entre chrétiens et bouddhistes dans la Maison « Haus der Stille » à Meschede. Le thème de cette année était « Peine et souffrance dans le bouddhisme et le christianisme ».

Alors que dans le monde monastique on observe- et en particulier chez les plus jeunes- une quête toujours plus aigue d'un profil propre dans le cadre de la tradition chrétienne, et que l'on reste volontiers entre semblables, beaucoup de personnes extérieures aux monastères se tournent vers d'autres religions dans leur recherche spirituelle. Dans cette recherche, il serait précisément nécessaire que les frères religieux apportent leur soutien moral et ouvrent de nouveaux espaces d'expériences. La série de congrès de l'organisme de liaison pour les grandes religions concernant les charismes des ordres et le dialogue des religions pourrait être un lieu de réflexion sur cette rencontre, mais les frères ne répondent que bien faiblement à cet appel.

Belgique

- Orval : Rencontre de la commission autour de Fabrice Blée. « Approfondir l'expérience du Dialogue ».
- Maredsous Père Luc Moës a organisé la troisième journée interreligieuse le dimanche 13 mars avec Chemsi Chéref-Khan, Emilio Plati, et Vincent Legrand sur le thème « Prophétie et Société ». Une célébration en l'honneur du 25ème anniversaire de la prière à Assise a été organisée avec El Kalima au mois d'août.
- Bénédictines de Liège : Ismaël Battacli et sa communauté nous rejoignent pour fêter la fin du Ramadan, soirée conviviale où la jeunesse musulmane était

particulièrement bien représentée, quelques jeunes étaient convertis « par ce que cette religion nous parle plus de Dieu, et a plus de prière que le christianisme », ont-ils dit.

Accueil d'un groupe du « centre zen de pleine conscience », (Thich Nhat Hanh).

- La SERIC (Semaine de Rencontre Européenne Islamo Chrétienne) a été co-organisée avec des membres de DIM, sur le thème de « Abraham ». Les conférenciers étaient Père B.Poupard osb, et Monsieur Farih Cuglu.
- Scourmont : février 2011, la session d'Hozumi Roshi.
- Hurtebise : cérémonie du thé avec Michiko Nojiri (juin 2011).
- Dans plusieurs monastères, les rencontres habituelles inspirées du zen se sont poursuivies.
- fr. Irénée (Chevetogne) et sr. Gaëtane (Liège) participent au douzième échange Est-Ouest avec le Japon, du17 septembre au 8 octobre 2011.

Espagne

- Pour la première fois à Constantine (Séville), le DIM ibérique s'élargit à la congrégation de l'Assomption, et non plus seulement à famille bénédictine (bénédictins, cisterciens, trappistes).
- La rencontre de Constantine s'est poursuivie par la journée dédiée aux personnes contact, à Madrid, en présence de la théologienne Sr. María Dolores Aleixandre (Jésus, expert en écoute), des représentants de la fraternité laïque du monastère de Santa María de Huerta (Soria), des laïcs qui constituent le Carmel Oecuménique de Loeches (Madrid), et des Canonesas del Santo Sepulcro de Saragosse.

Notre groupe interreligieux monastique a continué ses réunions sur le thème de la méditation spirituelle, dans le Prologue de l'Évangile de Jean (11-2010), dans la sourate 94 du Coran (02-2011), dans Nirvana Shatakam (05-2011) à Manresa, Kagyu Samyé Dzong dans le Centre Vedanta à Barcelone.

- Notre commission était partenaire de la rencontre du Parlement Catalan des Religions dans la ville française de Perpignan (ancienne maison des rois de Majorque, Catalogne et Aragon), les 18 et 19 Juin sur le thème « religions et modernité », organisé par l'Association « Amitié Inter-religieuse du Roussillon ».
- Le cours annuel de Formation Interreligieuse s'est poursuivi à Montserrat (4 - 8 Juillet), en collaboration avec l'ISCREB (Institut Supérieur de Sciences Religieuses à Barcelone), (théologie du dialogue interreligieux et une brève explication des bases historiques et religieuses de l'islam chiite).

- Des contacts réguliers sont établis avec le réseau des AUDIR (Association UNESCO pour le Dialogue Interreligieux), et l'Unescocat (l'Association de l'Unesco dans le domaine de la région catalane, associée à d'autres associations autour de la Méditerranée, de Perpignan (Roussillon) à Alicante.

- P. José Luis ocso (Santa María de Huerta) vit toujours dans le monastère de Midelt (Maroc), où il est beaucoup sollicité pour présenter le film "Des Hommes et des Dieux".

- Notre nouveau site Internet a pu enfin voir le jour : www.dimiberic.org

France

La formation des personnes-contact des pays francophones (octobre 2010) à l'abbaye bénédictine de Landevennec, était consacrée au Père Henri Le Saux, à l'occasion du centenaire de sa naissance (1910-1973). Elle réunissait une quarantaine de participants pour écouter :Jacques SCHEUER, sj ; Françoise JACQUIN ; Antoine DESFARGES ; Dr Bettina BAÜMER ; Fabrice BLEE. La dernière journée à l'Abbaye de Kergonan, monastère d'origine de Henri Le Saux, nous a permis une belle rencontre avec la communauté.

Tout au long de l'année des monastères organisent localement des rencontres interreligieuses :

- l'Abbaye de Jouarre : les rencontres avec l'Indouisme et avec le judaïsme.
- Abbaye d'En Calcat : Journée avec les scouts musulmans, et participation à la rencontre avec le Dalaï Lama à Toulouse.
- Martigné-Briand, enseignements sur l'Islam mais aussi marche méditative inspirée de celle de Maître Tich Na Than, pour les oblats de leur monastère.
- Abbaye de Sainte Lioba- Simiane une riche rencontre sur l'Islam avec l'expérience d'une femme croyante, Madame Méhérézia Maïza-Labidi.
- Sainte Scholatique d'Urt, session sur le Bouddhisme par Dennis Gira. Echanges sur l'interreligieux avec les oblats et les hôtes de passage.
- La Pierre-Qui-Vire Le sesshin annuel avec Roshi Hozumi attire toujours de nombreux participants.
- Abbaye Sainte Croix de Poitiers, des moniales participent régulièrement au groupe judéo-chrétien Hinnematov. .

Hollande et Belgique néerlandophone

Réunion des personnes-contact à Averbode (Belgique) le 25 octobre 2010. Le père Staf Feyaerts, prémontré, fêtait cette année les 25 ans de son zendo merveilleusement aménagé dans le grenier de la porterie. Une séance acadé-

mique dans l'après-midi a réuni 200 personnes. Staf Hellemans, a retracé l'évolution du bouddhisme.

- Réunion des personnes-contact à Anvers, le mercredi 25 mai 2011

Sœur Geertrui, trappistine de Bocholt, récemment revenue de Syrie, nous partage son expérience dans la communauté de Azeir, une fondation des trappistines de Valserena.

- Suite au film 'Des hommes et des dieux', un groupe de jeunes musulmans se rendra un week-end en décembre dans l'abbaye de Sœur Julian pour connaître la vie monastique et partager sur quelques thèmes, comme la violence, la solidarité, l'authenticité…

Anne-Marie Visser, pasteure et oblate bénédictine d'Egmond, nous communiqua comment elle collabore au 'Conseil des Eglises Protestantes' aux Pays-Bas où elle est chargée de la relation entre juifs, musulmans et chrétiens.

- Avec une confrérie Mourides du Sénégal, nous avons partagé un après-midi de dialogue avec Modou Ablaye M'Backe, qui nous exposa l'origine et le développement de leur confrérie. Leur fondateur est le cheikh Ahmadou Bamba (1853-1927) s'est opposé aux abus du colonialisme en se tournant vers Dieu et vers les pauvres. Le conférencier reconnut des points communs avec le monachisme, entre autre le désir de se purifier par le silence, la méditation et une vie qui cherche en tout à plaire à Allah. Les confréries Mourides sont répandues un peu partout dans le monde (Europe, Etats-Unis, Afrique du Sud).

Iles Britanniques

Depuis plusieurs mois, le MID cherche un remplaçant à Sr Lucy Brydon, qui reste très difficile à trouver. Une présidence collégiale est envisagée, de façon provisoire.

Une journée de pratique de "Scriptural Reasoning et Lectio Divina" co-organisée avec le Cambridge Interfaith Project, rassemblant juifs chrétiens et musulmans s'est révélée féconde, et demande à être poursuivie.

Italie

L' année 2011 a été marquée par le passage du relais, pour le rôle de coordinateur, de p. Cipriano Carini, OSB, à fr. Matteo Nicolini-Zani, moine de Bose. Les contacts repris avec divers monastères ont manifesté l'intérêt encore vif pour le dialogue interreligieux monastique, malgré les faibles forces humaines, et le désir de poursuivre. La formation et l'hospitalité sont perçues comme les deux priorités fondamentales.

Quelques activités organisées ou soutenues par le DIM à travers certains de ses membres

- Au Centre interreligieux[2] de l'ermitage San Martino di Agliati (Pomaia, Pisa), les rencontres interreligieuses se poursuivent durant l'année 2010-2011 sur le thème "Dieu aujourd'hui", organisées par un moine trappiste, membre du DIM Italie.

- L'Association culturelle Interdépendance organise cette année, à Turin et environs, une série d'initiatives interculturelles et interreligieuses intéressantes. Le DIM Italie l'a soutenue et y a participé.

- Un contact a été renoué avec Gitananda Ashram (www.ashramgita.com/ ; Altare, Savona), l'unique monastère hindou en Italie.

- Le monastère Saint Benoît de Milan organisera, du 24 octobre 2011 au 26 mars 2012, un cours de culture monastique intégralement consacré au thème "Le dialogue interreligieux : implications ecclésiales et monastiques". Le cours, qui comprend une soirée chaque semaine, prévoit l'intervention sur ce sujet d'experts et de moines, dont certains sont membres de notre commission.

- Du 16 septembre au 12 octobre, fr. Matteo était au Japon, avec quatre autres moines et moniales d'Europe et des États-Unis, dans le cadre des "Échanges spirituels Est-Ouest".

- La commission italienne du DIM a pris part à la Journée de réflexion, jeûne et prière avec le pape Benoît XVI a Assise le jeudi 27 octobre 2011. Notre réunion annuelle s'est tenue à Assise même, le jour suivant.

Scandinavie

Notre commission s'est réunie à Kirkenes, à l'extrême nord de la Norvège, à la frontière russe, pour prolonger notre dialogue avec le peuple Sami, sur son territoire. Nous avons aussi poursuivi notre réflexion sur l'intégration de laïcs comme membres de la commission. Ils seront nos « affiliés ».

Suisse

- Le 5 octobre 2010, nous nous réunissions chez les Clarisses de la Grant Part, dont le monastère domine lac Léman, pour une rencontre avec les bouddhistes tibétains du Mont-Pèlerin sur le thème de « l'intériorité ».

[2] www.centrointerreligiosoagliati.ea26.com/

- A Genève, les 9 et 10 octobre, un congrès sufi (confrérie Alawiya) de deux jours, centré sur la figure d'Abd el Kader, a montré à un public nombreux le visage d'un islam très ouvert. Les organisateurs avaient invité notre groupe à présenter l'esprit et les réalisations du dialogue interreligieux monastique.

- Le 13 novembre, chez les Clarisses de la Grant Part, avec un groupe d'étudiants, une journée consacrée à la mystique chrétienne et à la mystique musulmane.

- une communauté de base de Genève, qui organise des « après-midi théologiques », a souhaité être informée du dialogue interreligieux monastique et du rôle qu'il joue dans le dialogue en général ; deux membres de notre groupe répondirent à ce souhait

- Nous participons à Lausanne, au centre de l'Arzillier, a une table-ronde consacrée au « dialogue interreligieux et expérience spirituelle », avec des représentants du judaïsme, du bouddhisme, et de la religion bahaï.

- mai 2011, chez les moniales Dominicaines d'Estavayer-le-Lac deux jours de réflexion sur « la prière interreligieuse ». Plusieurs initiatives prises dans ce domaine suscitent des réactions. Cela a occasionné une réflexion commune faite par des représentants de toutes les confessions chrétiennes, protestante, orthodoxe et catholique. Elle a abouti à un document basé sur des déclarations du Conseil pontifical du dialogue interreligieux et de la Conférence œcuménique des Eglises. Puisque tous les hommes font partie d'une unique famille et sont pèlerins du même Absolu, qui pour nous est le Dieu trinitaire, la prière interreligieuse est en soi non seulement possible, mais souhaitable.

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Rencontre entre des moines zen du Village des Pruniers et les moines de Solesmes

Saint-Pierre de Solesmes, France : 26 september - 1 october 2011

Durant la dernière semaine de septembre 2011, les moines de l'Abbaye saint-Pierre de Solesmes ont accueilli un groupe de 21 moines et moniales bouddhistes de la Communauté du Village des Pruniers désireux de mieux connaître la vie monastique bénédictine.

Cette communauté a été créée en Dordogne en 1982 par le vénérable maître zen Thich Nhat Hanh, réfugié politique en Occident en 1966. Celui-ci a développé une nouvelle forme du bouddhisme en créant des œuvres sociales en vue d'aider les plus pauvres et en fondant des écoles et une université au Vietnam. Ce bouddhisme social ou 'engagé' a été influencé par les nombreux contacts de Thich Nhat Hanh avec l'Occident et les chrétiens. En plus des 4 communautés en Dordogne – 2 monastères de frères et 2 de sœurs – il a créé des communautés monastiques en Californie et au Vermont, mais aussi au Vietnam où elles ont subi une dure persécution à l'automne 2009, qui les a dispersées dans plusieurs pays voisins. Leur pratique fondamentale est l'entraînement à la pleine conscience, c'est-à-dire reprendre sans cesse conscience de leur acte d'être pour s'en émerveiller et en rendre grâce (mais sans remonter à Dieu !). Simultanément, comme tous les bouddhistes ils cultivent soigneusement la vision profonde et la compassion (mais envers qui ? puisqu'ils ignorent la notion de personne, tout étant impermanence !...).

Des groupes étaient déjà venus en visite à notre monastère en 2002 et 2007, mais la plupart de ce nouveau groupe venaient pour la première fois et n'avaient que quelques années de vie monastique. Les pays d'origine des participants reflétaient bien le caractère international de cette communauté : Vietnam, Etats-Unis, Irlande, Italie, Allemagne et France.

La mentalité asiatique répugne à un programme trop rigide où tout est prévu d'avance, aussi nous avons préféré, pour les échanges entre les offices liturgiques, laisser venir leurs questions et essayer d'y répondre. Plusieurs frères de notre communauté sont venus leur partager très simplement la façon dont ils s'acquittaient de leurs obédiences au service de la communauté. Ils ont pu ainsi mieux connaître le fonctionnement de notre vie, caractérisée par la recherche de Dieu dans une vie très familiale. On leur a parlé de l'accueil des jeunes candidats, des critères de discernement de l'appel à notre vocation, des diverses cérémonies, de la place de l'orgue dans notre liturgie, de l'accueil des pauvres, de l'importance de la formation théologique et de ses différentes branches. C'est sans doute cette dernière par-

tie qu'ils ont le plus de mal à suivre tant ils ont comme principe de toujours donner la priorité à la « pratique » sur la doctrine, cette différence apparaît comme une des divergences fondamentales entre nos genres de vie monastique.

Pour la majorité d'entre eux c'était leur premier contact avec des moines bénédictins. Chez plusieurs qui avaient, de près ou de loin, connu la tradition chrétienne, l'assistance assidue à nos Offices et à la Messe, non seulement réveilla ces semences enfouies depuis des années, mais provoqua même une vive nostalgie qui n'allait pas sans souffrance intérieure. Ce fut particulièrement sensible dans le fait de ne pas pouvoir communier.

Un aspect qui nous rapproche cependant beaucoup est l'accent mis sur la vie fraternelle en communauté. C'est une aide puissante dans la recherche spirituelle et un motif de joie, comme le chante le psaume 132 (« comme il est bon, comme il est doux de vivre en frères et d'être unis ! »). Mais aussi, les problèmes dans les relations entre frères de caractères très différents se retrouvent partout, quelles que soient les croyances. Il était donc intéressant de voir comment on cherche à les résoudre, de part et d'autre.

Le groupe fut également accuilli par nos sœurs moniales de Sainte-Cécile qui sont à proximité de l'abbaye. La grille de la clôture papale les impressionna mais les explications données par des moniales leur permirent de mieux comprendre le sens profond de cette séparation du monde et suscitèrent chez eux une vive admiration. Des questions furent aussi posées sur l'absence d'œuvres de service du prochain ? La visite s'acheva par les Vêpres : la pureté du chant des moniales leur fit une forte impression, plusieurs étaient touchés par ce chant qu'ils trouvaient 'angélique'.

Au cours de la récréation de la Saint Michel avec notre communauté, eurent lieu les échanges de cadeaux : ils nous offrirent deux livres de leur maître spirituel sur *les chants du cœur* et *les cérémonies du cœur* pratiqués chez eux. De notre côté nous avons donné le livre du Millénaire de Solesmes et Les paraboles évangéliques, commentés par un moine de Solesmes.

Pour tirer la conclusion de cette semaine de rencontre, on peut résumer ainsi les points émergents de part et d'autre.

Chez nos visiteurs, ce qui les a le plus marqué était de rencontrer « des moines et des moniales, des personnes qui nous ont aimé, qui s'aiment et qui vivent une recherche spirituelle authentique. Et aussi la continuité régulière de tous nos Offices au long du jour quoi qu'il arrive, et aussi la beauté très prenante du chant grégorien (pas seulement les pièces ornées pour les fêtes mais encore la psalmodie toute simple de la férie!). La stabilité dans le même monastère était une grande nouveauté pour eux qui font de fréquents voyages entre leurs monastères (pour des raisons qui m'échappent encore). L'exemple, cité par Mère Abbesse, de la doyenne de l'abbaye Sainte-Cécile qui, à 99 ans, n'avait jamais séjourné hors de son monastère, les a laissés littéralement pantois !

Enfin, ils ont dit combien ils avaient ressenti parmi nous la paix qui est la devise bénédictine.

Et du côté des moines de Solesmes ? peu après le départ de nos hôtes, nous avons eu un partage entre nous, qui a fait apparaître des points émergents dont voici les principaux.

Nous avons été touchés en premier lieu par le très grand respect qu'ils ont témoigné envers le caractère sacré de l'église et par leur attitude durant les offices. (ceux qui pouvaient lire le français suivaient attentivement les prières dans leur livret).

Ensuite leur délicatesse et leur politesse asiatique pour se plier à nos usages et nous gêner le moins possible par leur présence était remarquable.

Mais c'est surtout leur écoute, leur soif d'apprendre qui nous a frappés. De quoi avaient-ils soif ? de qui manquent-ils ? ils ne peuvent peut-être pas le dire. Ils cherchent la Vérité, et, pour certains d'entre eux, sans doute Quelqu'un.

Il est indéniable que des similitudes existent, extérieurement, entre ces moines bouddhistes et nous bénédictins : habit monastique, tonsure, rituels très précis, silence, recueillement, frugalité, célibat, renoncement à la famille, etc...Mais dès que l'on passe à la cause finale, on se trouve à une grande distance ; par exemple dans le cas des voeux c'est très clair. Faut-il donner raison à R. Kipling qui affirmait : « L'occident et l'orient cherchent à se rencontrer, mais ils ne se rencontreront jamais » ?

Si le but prochain et immédiat du dialogue interreligieux est de progresser dans la connaissance réciproque, on peut dire qu'il a été atteint durant cette semaine. Il a certainement allumé dans le cœur des uns et des autres le désir d'aller encore plus loin, et chez nous chrétiens une relance de la prière d'intercession afin que les rayons du Verbe fassent mûrir les semences de bonté et de vérité qui existent dans la 'tradition du Village des Pruniers'.

Dans l'attente d'une nouvelle rencontre.

Frère Michel-Marie du MERLE
Solesmes

BANGLADESH: INTERRELIGIOUS CONFERENCE ON "CLIMATE CHANGE"

Savar, Bangladesh, 8 October 2011

An Interreligious Conference on "*Climate Change: The Role of Religious Leaders*" was held on 8 October 2011 at *Savar,* Bangladesh. The conference was organized jointly by the *Qur'an Teaching Training and Research Centre,* he *Catholic Bishops' Conference Commission for Interreligious Dialogue* and the *Shalom Movement,* attended by more than 150 Imams and Pastors. As usually done in most of the interreligious meetings in the country, the conference was officially opened with the readings from the Holy Bible and the Qur'an.

Three main speakers during this event with their respective emphasis:

- *Mr. Autual Sarkar,* Director of *Caritas Bangladesh*: The creation comes from God as a gift for the humanity, quoting sources from the social teachings of the Church regarding the topic with the particular stress on the responsibility of human beings.

- *Dr. Abdullah Banqui,* Professor at the Bangladesh *Islami University*: For Muslims, the universe was created by Allah, and it is interrelated. A small change effects the whole system. Climate change, as claimed, is more dangerous than terrorism. In order to control the evident change in the environment, the human behaviour must be modified.

- *The Apostolic Nuncio* in Bangladesh, *H.E. Archbishop Joseph Marino:* The role of Religious Leaders in this regard is indispensable to mobilize public awareness, based on theological perspectives through the religious institutions entrusted to them (Churches and Mosques).

It was stated at the end of the conference that there are many similarities of views of both religious traditions which can be deepened in order to develop and enhance interreligious collaboration for the common good.

Fr. Markus Solo SVD

Jain Delegation's visit to the PCID

Vatican City, 6 December 2011

A fourteen member Jain delegation, led by Mr. Nemu Chandaria, Deputy-Chairman-Board of Directors of Institute of Jainology, London, UK paid a visit to the PCID and held discussions with the PCID Officials on 6th December 2011. H. Em. Card. Jean-Louis Tauran, H.Ex. Archbishop Pier Luigi Celata, Msgr. Andrew Vissanu Thanya-Anan and Father Santiago Michael represented the PCID at this meeting.

Welcoming the visitors, H. Em. Card. President referred to his participation at the Jain-Catholic seminar in New Delhi on 13th November, organized by this Dicastery in collaboration with the Church in India and World Fellowship of Religions, a Jain organization. Stating that our respective "spiritual traditions must contribute to help our fellow brothers and sisters in humanity to discover or rediscover the spiritual basis of every authentic human progress"; he called upon all believers "to be authentic builders of a more human, more just and more fraternal world".

In his response, Mr. Nemu Chandaria expressed thanks for the warm welcome received. He then recalled the first visit of a Jain delegation to the PCID in 1995, of which he was a member. Referring to the mutual contacts between the PCID and the Institute of Jainology since then, he called for more concrete ways of collaboration between the two.

The delegations then discussed, for a while, about the Jain-Catholic relations in general and expressed satisfaction over the cooperation and collaboration existing between the two communities and underlined the need to further strengthen them at the local levels. In this context, the Jain delegation was asked to establish and enhance relationship with the Church in England. As a common ground that can motivate such an enhanced relationship and collaboration, the delegations then discussed at length about the Jain principle of 'non-violence' (*Ahimsa)* and that of Christian 'charity'. While agreeing that both '*ahimsa*' and '*charity*' have some common elements with the potential to promote shared values, they contended that recognition of this fact can provide the needed fillip to Catholic-Jain relations. In his interventions, Msgr. Celata reminded that human being, human dignity should be at the centre, the focus of all our collaborative endeavours towards the common good. A press communiqué was issued at the end of this meeting highlighting the salient points of the discussions held.

After the meeting was over, the PCID delegation partook in a vegetarian lunch hosted, in its honour, by the Jain visitors. The following day, the Jains participated in the General Audience of the Holy Father whereby Mr. Nemu

Chandaria, the leader of the group presented to His Holiness a set of Jain manuscripts. They also visited St. Peter's Basilica, Vatican Library and Vatican Museum, all facilitated by the PCID.

Fr. Santiago MICHAEL

Press Communiqué

1. A meeting between the Pontifical Council for Interreligious Dialogue (PCID) and a Jain delegation took place on 6th December 2011 in the premises of the same Council. His Eminence Cardinal Jean- Louis Tauran, President, PCID, and Mr. Nemu Chandaria, Deputy Chairman-Board of Directors, Institute of Jainology, led the respective delegations.
2. This meeting was the second one after that of 14 February 1995. Moreover, there have been contacts between the Jain community and the PCID since 1986. Jain representatives participated in the "Assisi Days" in 1986, 2002 and 2011. Furthermore, on 13th November this year, the PCID organized, in Delhi, a seminar on Christian-Jain Dialogue, in collaboration with the Catholic Church in India and World Fellowship of Religions at Acharya Sushil Muni Ashram.
3. In the said meeting, held in an atmosphere of mutual respect and friendship, members of the delegations expressed satisfaction over the cordial relations and cooperation that exist between both the Christian and Jain communities in countries where they live their day-to-day lives in proximity.
4. While expressing the desire to expand mutual concrete collaboration, the delegations agreed that it must be ever more strengthened at the local levels to better contribute towards the common good of the entire society. In particular, they stressed the importance of educating the younger generations to be aware of their own traditions, and to know and better respect that of others.
5. With an aim to find concrete areas of convergence as the basis of collaboration, they discussed about the principle of 'non-violence' (*Ahimsa*) and that of Christian 'charity'. They found some common elements that can motivate and sustain the Jain-Catholic collaboration, recognizing the differences between the two principles.
6. They also recognized that these elements, on a more practical level, call upon the followers of both the traditions to promote mutual respect, truthfulness, honesty, freedom, peace, social harmony and to commit themselves to eliminate every form of violence against human beings, in particular injustice, poverty and exploitation of natural resources.

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JANUARY – DECEMBER 2011

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The Bulletin 138 2011/3 will be entirely dedicated to the

HINDU-CHRISTIAN COLLOQUIUM
ON
'ENHANCING HINDU-CHRISTIAN RELATIONS AND COLLABORATION FOR JUSTICE, PEACE AND HARMONY'

Jnana Deepa Vidyapeeth, Pune, India (6-9 November 2011)

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